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VOLUME ONE, ISSUE NO THIRTEEN

EARLY WINTER 2003

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THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

Deputy Politicos Give an Inside Tour
of Mayor Street's Victory Gala

CITY CHAMPS CROWN HOMECOMING KING

BY LOREN HUNT

CENTER CITY, Phila.—"Good evening. This is Friends of Street, calling to remind you to vote today for Democrat John Street for Mayor. Remember to go to the polls today—Every vote counts! Your vote is critical. Be sure to vote today for John Street. If you need a ride to the polls, call 215-751-9436. Vote today!"

I had planned to meet up with Harry B. Cook, a political consultant for the Street campaign, who would give me an inside tour of the final Election Day push and subsequent festivities. Cook and I were supposed to meet at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 98 facility at 17th and Spring Garden streets, where the union has graciously allowed the incumbent mayor to set up a temporary phone bank operation. But on arriving, I was informed that Harry B. Cook was "in the field." Via cell phone, Cook confirmed this, and told me to stay put until the polls closed and he could pick me up. Now I have been assimilated into the campaign, reading a script into the answering machines of poor unsuspecting citizens who may have forgotten that today is the day they must vote, and that John Street is the man they must vote for.

Several names on the phone number list, when called, do not seem to correspond to the voices on the other end of the line. One phone number listed under the name "Nicole" yields an answering machine message featuring a "William" and a "Brian" apologizing for their absence in twangy tandem sing-song. For the most part, I am hung up on the second I say I'm one of the Friends of John Street. At 7:45 P.M., there is a knock on the window of my little phone cell at Local 98. The man on the other side of the glass motions for me to leave the room and follow him. It's Joe Grace, who ran unsuccessfully for City Council this May and has now joined up with Street's campaign. He is wearing a bright red T-shirt, tucked into his belt-less jeans. He seems capable of accomplishing magical fairytale tasks, such as jumping from mountaintop to mountaintop, by sheer force of his enthusiasm. In the main room, where most of the other phone volunteers are stationed, Grace explains in painstakingly plain, simple, and easily understood English that most of the people who are going to vote have already voted and that we volunteers should use these last fifteen minutes before the polls close to make personal calls to our family and friends, beseeching them to vote if they haven't already.

"Hey, Dad."
"Oh, hey. You didn't find a place to live yet, did you? How is your job? Are they happy to have you back?"
"I was actually calling to ask if you voted today."
"[Laughter] No... I'm not registered. Mom did though, I think."
"Oh. Well, I guess you can't vote for Street then. I'm volunteering at their thingy right now and they told us to call family and friends."
"Isn't Street running for mayor of Philadelphia?"
"Yeah."
"We don't live in Philadelphia."
"[Laughter] Oh, I guess you don't."
"[Laughter] Nice try, though."
"Yeah. I'm covering Election Night stuff for the paper and sort of got recruited to make phone calls. This guy I was supposed to meet isn't here yet so I figured what the fuck, right?"
"Sure. You're coming home for Thanksgiving, aren't you?"
"Of course."
"Okay, Loren. Thanks for calling, anyway."
"No problem, Dad."
"Talk to you later."
"Bye."

Shortly after I hang up with my father in yet another botched

turn to STREET, page 3

KANDY WHALES; N. STAR BAR; 12/18
A night of festive music and mass congregation. Also:
The Nine Lights. 2639 Poplar St., 9 p.m., 21+.

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May's Primary Elections
A Preview of the Season

Investment banker Andrew Hohns said he plans to mount his second primary challenge to state Rep. Babette Josephs for the state legislature's 182nd House District, which includes Center City West, Grays Ferry, and parts of South Philadelphia. Hohns received 44 percent of the vote in the 2002 Democratic primary. Realtor and attorney A.J. Thomson of Fishtown said he is planning his own second primary run in the 175th House District against state Rep. Marie Lederer. The district snakes south along the Delaware from Fishtown to Queens Village. Thomson, who runs a youth football league, a tutoring program, and public school spelling bees, received 23 percent of the vote in the 2002 primary with a budget of \$7,100. A spokesperson for Lederer said the Democratic incumbent would run for a seventh term.

Honorable Mention

Views from the Cash Bar on the Katz Campaign's Final Night

BY BERNARD VAUGHAN

CENTER CITY, Phila.—Early in the night, the chandelier-lit Grand Ballroom of the Radisson Plaza-Warwick Hotel was suffused with the air of an Irish wake for a terminal relative who wasn't quite dead yet.

Drinks in hand, sharp-dressed Katz supporters half-embraced in quiet corners and assured each other that, no matter what, they'd "fought the good fight," while on the dance floor, young and old volunteers in blue Katz shirts sweated to party-at-all-costs classics like "I Will Survive" and "Lady Marmalade" doled out by the eight-piece rock-funk-R&B-mambo fusion ensemble "Johnny O and the Classic Dogs of Love."

At 9:30, on one of the televisions set up along the ballroom's carpeted perimeter, Channel 12 was already showing Street at 60 to Katz's 40 percent. There I heard a woman remark, "the people that vote for Street are not educated. They don't research anything."

A minute later I asked the woman, 39-year-old Sharon Moss of South Philadelphia, how she felt

about the night.

"It doesn't look good," said Moss. And she expanded upon her earlier comment. Street voters, she insisted, "aren't voting on actual research, they're not looking at crime, they're not looking at the neighborhoods. I think the majority of Street voters are uneducated."

"Cheers," said 33-year-old Jerome Maida of Wynnefield, who was watching the television along-side Moss. They toasted their plastic cups. Maida insisted there was no way Katz trailed by 20 percent-age points, and claimed still-to-be-counted results from "other key precincts" would narrow Street's lead. I heard this talk of "other key precincts," this last gasp of hope, from many Katz supporters as the foreboding early numbers came in.

I ran into Maida again at 10:15, just after the Associated Press had declared Street the winner. Where earlier he expressed a smiling enthusiasm in his toast with Moss, now, just forty-five minutes later, his face displayed—like so many

turn to KATZ, page 3

On the Anonymous Captioneer

BY HENRY WILLIAM BROWNEJOHNS

One of these gargantuan Sport Utility Vehicles that so ubiquitously abase the age pulled through a stop sign with all the animal senselessness of its driver, and your author trod into the street and shouted after it, as is his habit. Or, rather, I raised my hand to my mouth and tuned my vocal cords, but was halted by the sight of my own sentiment already glued to the fender of the offending vehicle. A bumper sticker on that mammoth automobile read, in bold letters, "I drive a BIG CAR because I am a BIG JERK." This was the second such sticker I had seen in a week, in amateurish and fuzzy black and white. There is a Robin Hood on the loose, and he has an ink-jet printer.

The argument about the ethics of defacing motor-vehicular property with homemade stickers will end, I assure you, in an argument about the propriety of buying and driving twelve-ton troop-transports through our city streets. And denouncing gas-guzzling SUVs is such a certain shibboleth of liberal piety, that if this column enters into it, the entire conservative readership will skip to the comics, and the leftists will all start salivating for no good reason. So I will save myself the bother.

What I can digest this down to is this: no-one has ever defended the use of such oversized civilian tanks with any argument other than that "it is a free country." It only follows that the rascal who has begun defacing these Cars with a capital "C" is as free to do what he does, by the same added common sense. Drive your monster cars, America, for indeed, you are free to do so; only know that the price for such freedom is now a rightful humiliation at the hands of some clever adhesive-wielding bandit, who has had enough of this non-debate, and has taken it upon himself to clearly label the world, so that all us fools understand it.

FIVE YEAR DIARY

... went to hospital. Molly thinks she has hang-over. JANUARY 17TH, 1960: Got up, did housework. Mummy did floor and washing. Went to lunch with Uncle Reg and Auntie Billie. Went to hospital. Daddy comes home with us. Disappointed. Went to Uncle Joe's to discuss holiday. JANUARY 18TH, 1960: Cooked Daddy bacon and egg. Went down and had my hair done. Daddy foolishly went to shop. Fingers and feet started to swell. He phoned Doc. Finished jumper for Daddy. JANUARY 19TH, 1960: Had three letters in the post about jobs. Got hot dinner from cafe for four of us. Doctor came. Went and bought wool for jumper for Mummy. Ken came in and talked. Watched TV and started new knitting. JANUARY 20TH, 1960: Mummy has whole day off. Up to town. I bought new summer dress. Had lunch in Swan and Edgar. Walked round all the shops. Home and carried on with new knitting. Watched No Hiding Place. Bed. JANUARY 21ST, 1960: Another letter in post from Bedford College ...

EGYPTIAN SONS
CONSUMED WITH
BURNING BUSHBlood Boils on the Blazing Arab Street,
Peds Play Frogger Across 8 Lanes;
Denial Turns Reporter RedTAXI DRIVERS CONDEMN
RULE BY RUSTED FIAT

BY JONATHAN SHAININ

CAIRO, Egypt—America's leaders, with their infinite gifts for strategy, have professed great concern for the temperature of the Arab "street," and their pliant media stenographers have followed suit. Presuming, I guess, that the Arabs lack homes, or at least that as a nomadic people, they prefer to congregate outside them, we can learn, from close attention to the "street," the ever-shifting mood of its swarthy inhabitants. Your average Amman or Damascus bureau chief, lacking a better lead, will try to file one or two of these Arab Street stories every week or so, walking outside his luxury hotel to talk to a few ordinary people and divine the depth of their misery and their antipathy to America. A seasoned reader of the Arab Street like three-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Thomas Friedman is a latter-day equivalent of those storied Native American warriors, who by putting their ear to the bare earth could hear the stampee of horses from miles away. Friedman doesn't have to leave his office in Washington to know that the Arabs would like more American pop music, more American television, and more of that American fast food that the world craves so.

The Arab Street, I can report with accuracy from Cairo, is very crowded, and often rather hot. It is overflowing with ancient compact automobiles and thronged with hurried pedestrians, especially in the evening, as we are in the midst of Ramadan. In Cairo, there are lanes painted on the asphalt roads, but they are as real as Egypt's democracy; a two-lane highway will, at certain points, accommodate up to four vehicles, side-by-side two per lane; the two lanes of traffic on a one-way city street will often include an unofficial third lane that carries cars in the opposite direction. If a driver comes upon two slow-moving cars side-by-side, blocking the two lanes in front of him, he will flash his lights—and it is common, at night, to drive without the headlights on, so as to make the flashing more dramatic—honk his horn, and just drive right between them, expecting that they will move slightly to each side to let him through. If the offending vehicles fail to execute this move, they will suffer more honking until they yield the right-of-way. The horn is mounted on a lever just next to the wheel—like a turn signal—rather than in the middle, where it must be mashed awkwardly in the American style; this facilitates the Morse code-like pattern of endless beep-and-flash communication and prevents any Cairo driver, so far as I observed, from consulting the unnecessary rear- or side-view mirrors. Pedestrians—who for some reason are present in surprising numbers on elevated highways that run through the city center—think nothing of walking into two, or three, or four lanes of speeding traffic, sauntering casually and directly through the gaps between moving cars with impeccable timing, or at least with a certain confidence that the brakes on a

turn to ARAB, page 3

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Correcting the Record:
Regarding Issue Twelve

The Monthly Forecast on Page Fifteen of Issue Twelve contained an erroneous listing, which stated that the sculptor Billy Blaise Dufala built his room out of scraps of wood and lives with a beekeeper. Neither of these is true. In fact, it is Billy's brother Steven Dufala who built one wall of his room out of scraps of wood and lives with a beekeeper. Scott Kip, the beekeeper, informs us that most of his bees have taken ill and died. We regret all of this.

FAULTY DUCK BOAT
KILLED 13 IN 1999Ride the Ducks Owner
Says Philly Boats Are Safe

Thirteen passengers drowned in 1999 when an amphibious tourist vessel, similar to ones operating in Philadelphia, sank in Hot Springs, Ark. The vessels, called DUKWs or "ducks" transported troops and cargo in World War II. More recently, they have been used to carry tourists on land and water in at least a dozen cities, including Philadelphia, where Ride the Ducks carries passengers through Old City and South Street before dipping into the Delaware River. A report by a federal agency attributed the 1999 accident to poorly-maintained anti-flooding devices. Bob McDowell, owner of Ride the Ducks, said that his vessels are safe and properly maintained in accordance with the most recent regulations, which he helped draft. The company that owned and operated the Arkansas vessel is not affiliated with Ride the Ducks.

ELECTIONS GOING DIGITAL

BY RICHARD CHARLES

This November, hundreds of thousands of votes were cast using a digital system being aggressively marketed to municipal governments by Ohio-based Diebold Inc. Critics have charged that Diebold's voting systems are vulnerable to manipulation because they do not give voters a receipt or leave any kind of paper trail, which makes post-election recounts and audits next to impossible.

For a company that wants direct control of the democratic process and claims to be impartial, Diebold's executives have made some stunningly partisan statements. In a fundraising letter for President Bush's 2004 campaign, Diebold CEO Walden O'Dell said he was "committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year."

Diebold has sent cease-and-desist letters to Internet hosts around the country, including Swarthmore College in Delaware County, where two students posted internal Diebold documents and emails. One message from an employee states that it "seems to be an accepted practice to exaggerate our progress ... then make excuses at delivery time when these products and services do not come through." In an email, David L. Dill, a professor of computer science at Stanford University, said it was important that the Diebold documents remain viewable by the public. "It is reckless to trust these machines with our votes," he wrote. "I've personally been able to read these emails because of the efforts of students. It is in the public's interest that the truth be known. The law must not be abused to suppress this information."

TODAY'S DREARY HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

Only Mothers & Fathers of Invention Can Save Dull Youngsters

It is easy, and fun, to look at the young generation and mock their inferiority to one's own. So let's try it. Relevant to the recent celebration of Halloween, it is ducks in a barrel this year.

A whole troop of little cuties just walked by, two wearing plastic fireman suits, three in pre-fab Power Rangers garb, a couple merely sporting pointy black hats that have been selling at the 99 cent store since July, and one in a Spiderman body suit that was probably measured out on the emaciated body of an underage sweatshop worker in the distant employ of Wal-Mart.

Like musical influence, the quality of children's Halloween costumes is probably a delayed phenomenon, caused not by the children's own dullness, but by their parents'. If so, then this has been a

PEW & PALS POISED TO PLUCK
PRICELESS PILE OF PAINTINGS
FOR PLUSH PARKWAY PALACEHOW INSTITUTIONS
ADAPT & SURVIVE

Not all museums and libraries are department stores of culture like the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Free Library, one-stop emporiums that boast one of everything one could imagine. The city also has many boutique arts and culture institutions, which, like the Barnes Foundation, devote themselves to exploring the full depth of one or two smaller areas of study. Almost all of these institutions were born from the collections of a founder. Like Albert Barnes, most founders devised rules on just how their collections should survive and just what kinds access the public should have to them. After the founders die, it is up to boards and curators to interpret the founders' original missions while adapting to the public's shifting tastes, fluctuations in endowments and other funding sources, and the surrounding urban environment.

We talked with curators and directors from four of Philadelphia best-known collections about how their institutions have managed to remain relevant

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The Campaign to Bring the Barnes
Foundation to PhiladelphiaWILL \$20 BILLION OF ARTWORK
MAKE THE REVERSE COMMUTE?

BY JOEL ROSE

LOWER MERION, Pa.—Dr. Albert Barnes made his fortune selling a pharmaceutical called Argylol in the first decades of the 20th century, and then started collecting art.

In 1912, Barnes acquired his first paintings by Van Gogh, Picasso and Renoir, and made the first of many art-buying trips to Paris. Barnes's collection eventually grew too large for his mansion in Lower Merion. In 1922 he established the Barnes Foundation—part museum, part school, and part arboretum—as "an educational experiment under the principles of modern psychology."

At his foundation, as in his extensive writings on art, Barnes advocated a very specific approach to aesthetics. "Most of the looking at pictures, by those untrained to see, is a search for something to be recognized as already familiar from the past," he wrote in a 1929 essay, entitled "Learning to See." Instead, Barnes thought his paintings should be seen as "a record of what [the artist] saw and felt in his intercourse with a particular objective situation."

Barnes eventually amassed a collection of Cezannes, Picassos, Renoirs and Matisses that is unequalled anywhere in the world. When he died in 1951, admission to the Barnes Foundation was still by invitation only. A decade later, the foundation opened its doors to the public for two days a week. Today, it is open three and a half days. While time and court rulings have gradually chipped away at some of Barnes's idiosyncratic rules, much of his original vision remains intact. The paintings hang exactly where they did on the day he died. Anyone willing to make a reservation can see the world's greatest private collection of Post-Impressionist and early modern painting for a mere five dollars.

But get there while you can—the collection might be on its way out of Montgomery County altogether. And some say this is exactly what Albert Barnes feared most: that the paintings would end up in a museum like any other, divorced from the theory and vision that brought them together in the first place.

Today, Barnes's collection is worth upwards of \$20 billion. Nevertheless, the Barnes Foundation is struggling to stay afloat. Three philanthropic organizations—the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lenfest Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation—support a plan to move the Barnes collection to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, expand the foundation's board, and restock its sagging endowment—at a total cost of more than \$150 million. The idea enjoys the backing of Philadelphia Mayor John Street, Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell and state Attorney General Mike Fisher. They say this is what Barnes would have wanted.

Critics of the move call it a corporate-style takeover, in the name of more cultural tourism dollars for Philadelphia. Barnes created a school, they say, not a museum. The Barnes Foundation is currently closed to the public for half of the week, when it hosts classes in art appreciation. And a handful of students from those classes charge that the move would gut the foundation's educational program. They will argue their case in court starting in December.

EBBING ENDOWMENT FOR APPRECIATING ART

To move the collection, the Barnes Foundation's administration must persuade the court that it's "impossible or impractical"—not simply inconvenient—to run the institution the way its founder intended.

Fisher, Pennsylvania's top lawyer, has expressed support for the Barnes Foundation's petition to move. Fisher acknowledges that the move would require a major change in the foundation's charter. "That's why we looked at this petition carefully," he said in a telephone interview. "I think if Albert Barnes were alive today, he would put his stamp of approval on this."

The alternative, says Fisher, is bankruptcy. At his death in 1951, Albert Barnes left his foundation with an endowment of \$10 million. But Barnes required that the money be invested conservatively, in government bonds. So while the value of the Barnes collection skyrocketed in the 1980s, the foundation's endowment crumbled along with the bond market. By the beginning of the 1990s, the Barnes Foundation was art rich—but cash poor.

"We are running on fumes, basically," Barnes Chairman Bernard Watson told reporters in September of 2002 as he announced the trustees' desire to move to the collection to Philadelphia. "We're trying to get through each year without going into bankruptcy."

It is not the first time the Barnes trustees have asked the court for relief from the foundation's strict terms of indenture, with which Barnes created the foundation in 1922. In 1993, then-Chairman Richard Glanton asked a court to allow some of the paintings to leave the mansion for a tour to raise money. The subsequent world tour raised some \$17 million. But much of that money disappeared during the 1990s, as Glanton led the Barnes Foundation into a series of well-publicized lawsuits—highlighted by a 1996 suit charging the foundation's Lower Merion neighbors with

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THIS NEWSPAPER CONTAINS

- Miscellaneous News Items.
- Editorial and assorted Letters.
- Several articles conclude here.
- J.E. UNDERHILL visits Morocco.
- J. ROSE on the Barnes Foundation concludes.
- Extended review of two books.
- The lengthier book review concludes.
- N. FRIEDMAN & TODD ITO on the NBA.
- ALTAI ARGUN on bicycles.
- 10&11: Arts & Letters. "The Petrushi," a work of fiction by MOSHE ZVI MARVIT.
- 12&13: Drawings and comics by HIROSHIMA LEMON, THOMAS HURRIC, GARY PANTER, BEN KATCHOR, MARK PRICE, MIKE OKUM, GEORGE TAUTUS & JACOB WEINSTEIN.
- Two diagrams by LORD WHIMSY & a full crop of GENERAL ADVERTISMENTS.
- The New Saxes by BRIAN KATZBURD.
- FINDINGS, SPOTTINGS, & a Review.
- The Bureau of Puzzles & Games, presents a Cryptogram by JASON GIBBS, and an Acronymatron by HENRY FLOSS.



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editors@philadelphiaindependent.net 1026 Arch Street Philadelphia, Penna. 19107 (215) - 351 - 0777

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AGENDA FOR 2004

Our president believes that when he wreaks war on the world, he is doing God's work. Looking at the revelations of the past year, it is clear that no quantity of evidence could ever shake this belief. There were reasons our government gave for making war on Iraq and spying on its own citizens; retribution for 9-11, the welfare of the Iraqi people, weapons of mass destruction, etc. All of these reasons have been debunked. (We will spar with anyone supporting these reasons in the columns over on right.) But none of these flimsy given reasons equals the actual motive, the cause behind our present foreign policy, which can only be found in the hearts of a small clique of men who believe they can see further than the rest of us, and that history will bear them out. It is this belief that turns men into tyrants.

If this nation were run like a courtroom, the judge would have thrown Bush out long ago. But to rest on this sure knowledge, to wallow in our own rightness, is to become the mirror of our own enemy, just as Bush has taken on the characteristics (religious fanaticism, disregard for human life) of his enemies. This is not a courtroom, and there is no higher power to hear our plea. Before heading to the United Kingdom for a state visit at the time of this writing, Mr. Bush told British interviewer Sir David Frost: "Freedom is a beautiful thing. I would first say ... aren't you lucky to be in a country that encourages people to speak their mind?" Smugness aside, Mr. Bush is unlucky enough to be at the head of a country that forces its leaders to listen. Come

next Nov. 2, the White House will be listening quite intently to the voters of Pennsylvania.

Given what happened back in 2000, it would be foolish of us to put all of our faith in the next election. Disproportionate numbers of black voters were turned away from the polls and roving bands of aides—flown in from Washington D.C. and New York specially for the occasion—pushed, punched and kicked Democratic observers and instigated a riot that ended the manual counting of ballots in Miami-Dade County.

This is nothing compared to what the G.O.P. may have in store for us in 2004. As one anonymous administration official told the *New York Times*, "[Force] is never the first choice. It is, indeed, something to be pursued when diplomacy and other means have not produced results. But the use of force is sometimes necessary." He was speaking to our foreign policy, but Bush has been just as eager to do violence to our institutions and our process.

It isn't easy to lead an ordinary, pleasant life and maintain an awareness of the present state of affairs and the anger that follows from it. Our true feelings often only make themselves felt in brief bursts, pricked by a headline or dispatch from the front. But if ever there was a time to nurture our anger into a steady eleven-month campaign of focused effort to remove Bush from power, that time is now.

The Republican National Convention will be held in New York City from Aug. 29 through Sep. 2, 2004. The general election is on Nov. 2.

ON THE MARATHON

BY HENRY WILLIAM BROWNEJOHNS

Every year, on the first Sunday in November, 35,000 thousand masochists run voluntarily from the Verrazano Narrows Bridge to Central Park—and not even the short way. Instead, they do it to be sure it takes them 26.2 miles, in a mistaken tribute to the distance run by that messenger bringing news of the Battle of Marathon home to Athens. That, firstly, Marathon is only twenty-three miles from Athens, and, secondly, that the messenger who so famously ran that first course died when he arrived at the capital, are both nit-pickers' details that none of the latter-day New York City harriers are interested in knowing. These folks just want to run; and if they survive this one, bet that more than a few of them will come to Philadelphia to do it again in a few weeks.

Despite its superficial senselessness, the New York City marathon has become one of the city's most communal events, a day when a full quarter of the city's population, by some counts, will come out and spend a Sunday morning lining the course route to see, razz, and pity the wheezing corpses in their labors. Runners, bent double on the happy side of the finish line, all pant the same tribute to the city, that it is the motivation, applause, and support of the people of New York City that make such a feat possible, and even make it, in the skewed, sickened perspective of the modern long-distance runner, enjoyable.

You may already know of Williamsburg—you needn't be coy. Much has been written and whispered about this modern age American Bohemia, most famous node and core of today's ambitious and fashionable not-so-young youth. It has often seemed that an entire aesthetic generation has settled in this single territory, and to talk of Williamsburg has become a conversational short-hand for talk of the entire triumphal demographic of Generations X, Y, and Z.

To keep this well-heeled population happy, Williamsburg has grown a truly preposterous crop of coffee-shops, clothing boutiques, candle-lit bars, and shops where a fellow can by his late grandfather's leather suitcase for ten times what it sold for at the estate sale. Again, in the short-hand, this region is called Bedford Avenue, one of the most affluent commercial strips in the entire borough of Brooklyn. It is

along this tony lane that the marathoners shuffle in the agony of their twelfth mile.

And after being cheered through Bay Ridge, enheartened by the throngs of Sunset Park, and serenaded by string quartets through Fort Greene, the marathoners all lament the stony silence they meet there in Williamsburg. The sidewalks are populated only by a few disheveled romantics having an early brunch at the outdoor cafes, and not one of these reportedly even acknowledged the runners over their soy-based egg replacement, tofu-bacon, and latte.

The bohemian mentality becomes so obsessed with openness and experimentation that the personality attached to it becomes downright belligerent towards everyone who is not as enlightened as they would be. The occasional academic might call this the 'Middle America Syndrome,' after the generalized disdain in which so-called Middle America is held by the self-styled elites of the coasts. And nothing has become so Middle American as the urge to shed one's bourgeois malaise with the sweat extracted by a near-fatal run. Jogging, and marathoning in its extreme, is something of a mass-social midlife crisis, an empowering flirtation with suicide by a society that has lost all sense of its own power.

So when Middle America runs right through the heart of the American Left Bank, the denizens stay in bed, their disinterest a placard. Of course, it is also true that the residents of the Burg are ordinarily late sleepers, a lazy bunch content to eat breakfast after the sun has already begun to descend, because this is also an affront to the norms of the society which is so fashionably snubbed. And the marathoners grow weary in the silence of their collective foot-steps, until they turn off of Bedford Avenue and into the roar of a new neighborhood's fascination and good-natured epithets. And a few hours later, when even the most asthmatic stragglers have long made it into Queens, and the empty water bottles line the kerbs of Bedford Avenue awaiting the brooms of the Sanitation Department, the bleary-eyed Williamsburgers emerge from their lofts and dens, look at the mess and the abandoned barricades, and nonchalantly ask if the marathon had been today. Ohhh. Oh well.

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REGARDING THE FIRST PERSON: Unless you believe that we would send a reporter out to write about you, we do not recommend that you submit your writings on yourself.

PLEASE BE PATIENT: We are perpetually behind. If you're mad, please write us an email and say so. Even better, email us and tell us to hurry up before you get mad.

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FREQUENCY OF PUBLICATION

We are going to slow down for a little while to catch up on stuff and ponder things. The next issue will be out in early February, 2004. If you have any opinions on what our frequency ought to be, please feel free to call or write. Thank you very much for your patience.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tell us what you think about this newspaper generally, or anything herein, or anything elsewhere. Send your letter for publication to letters@philadelphiaindependent.net or THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT, Bureau of Letters, 1026 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Penna 19107

RE: SAFE STREETS, PART 2

DEAR EDITOR:

The drug dealers who were quoted on the ineffectiveness of Operation Safe Streets [Issue Twelve, Page One] were not entirely correct. As a former drug user, and one who is aware of many other drug users' habits, I can tell you that Safe Streets did in fact cut down on a lot of open air dealing. If one is a determined addict, one will find drugs. Many dealers have taken to delivering. But many suburban addicts were left out of the loop. Formerly, open-air markets were prevalent, and anyone could cop drugs, any time, any kind. Now my support group bulges with those who have given up. They were dissuaded by the police presence, and the danger of losing their vehicle.

One neighborhood, Mt. Airy, has changed for the better. Open-air drug dealing is gone, and with it, the influx of young thugs from other neighborhoods who were bringing lots of trouble with them. As for North Philadelphia, this is a more distressed and misunderstood neighborhood. What would be quickly reported and responded to in another neighborhood is a new game—cat and mouse.

Drugs are a form of genocide, and for some reason, the participants are not always vilified by their communities. Thugs and gangsters on television and in radio are instead treated as cultural heroes. Mayor Street has said drug dealers are natural entrepreneurs. He has obviously never thought of the stress of withdrawal, or of the simple fact that drug addicts are not customers but diseased people fighting a losing battle with their own bodies and souls. Drugs do not require any skill or talent to sell. They sell themselves. And those who betray humanity by selling them are criminals. It is as simple as that.

I once asked a young dealer if it bothered him to sell. "You are a devil and I will sell crack to you until you die," he replied. Some conscience.

Please withhold my name from this letter.

ANONYMOUS

WYNCOTE, PENNSYLVANIA

IF I WERE MAYOR

TO THE EDITORS:

How can city planners tolerate "garage houses"? Walk down a street with ugly notices of "violators will be prosecuted" and no room for trees. It's like having a parking lot on your block and the ambulance of life with neighbors is lost without windows on the street. Contrast this with the old neighborhood porches in some South Philadelphia areas and you can see the loss to the community.

There is an old large empty coal building on Ninth Street and Washington Avenue that, with minimal improvements, could be converted into a place for "dumpster divers" where folks could bring objects—currently left for trash pickup—that could be fixed, such as furniture, appliances, etc., by employing people to work on them and reselling them like a huge yard sale. This would recycle and reuse in a way that would reduce the use of landfills, and the cost of trash pickups. Other large empty buildings in this city could be given to enterprises willing to take recyclable glass, paper and plastic, to produce recycled paper.

There should be huge parking lots at all entrances to Philadelphia (e.g. at 30th Street Station and at interstate highway entrances) and no parking lots at 15th and Chestnut and Eighth and Chestnut streets. This way, buses could actually move without being slowed to a crawl by cars in Center City. This is a walking city. We should check out London's downtown car tax as a possible means of reducing congestion.

Most of the above could be easily accomplished with a Land Value Tax that would cause parking lots to disappear since they now pay so little tax on valuable Center City land and do nothing to improve city life for tourists or residents. And wouldn't it be delightful to have what many European cities have—pedestrian walks in the streets (the Italian Market would be a great place to have one). All of these ideas are about the need for more people-to-people communication on our streets.

I can dream, can't I?

JOAN SAGE

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA

THE DSL PEOPLE

HELLO BELOVED INDEPENDENT:

Verizon has been unable to add DSL to my phone line without disabling the phone service. This has been going on for more than a month and seems to call into question their slogan, "Make progress every day." Back in 1999, I added a second phone line to use for a fax machine and DSL and it took a very long time to get it installed. DSL was a new service in this area back then. Now, four years later, I want to get rid of that line and put DSL on my primary line. You would think Verizon could handle that in the 21st century.

I ordered the service at the end of August. Before too long, a cheery recorded message

told me the service had been installed, but I found it didn't work at all. Since then, they have made three more attempts to activate the DSL and each time my phone becomes possessed. I first noticed this when I picked up the phone to check for messages and heard people having a conversation. This morning I have DSL working but no calls in or out. I've had six or seven visits from various technicians. The first ones tried to blame it on my house wiring on the theory that the customer is always wrong. I pointed out that I'd been using DSL on the other line for four years and simply moving the wires from one line to the other, at their interface box, made the DSL work or not work. They got it to work on the other line four years ago, so I know it's possible.

The first time they came to see why the phone didn't work, three different repair visits were needed to ascertain that the problem was not me, my house, or the wires in the backyard; the problem was at the central office. Crew #3 had the office bypass the DSL and the phone worked again. They explained that I would have to call and get the "DSL People" to put things right. I did. They still haven't. It's been about a month and a half since I placed the order.

Each time I call the DSL People, they start with insinuations that the problem is likely to be with the wiring in my home, and they want me to tell them about my computer. It makes little difference when I tell them about the many techs who have disproved all that after spending idle hours in my backyard waiting for the central office to call them back. Finally the agent will relent, warn me that if the problem is in my house they'll send me a big bill, and then they tell me to leave my DSL modem attached to the bad line and that it will be activated sometime in the next 24 hours. Swell.

This last time around, I had been briefed by the Local Manager who told me that only the customer could talk to the DSL People but that if I would please pass along a few words about the split bank and the clean cable pair he was sure they'd straighten it out. So, after patiently explaining all this and still being given the full our-customers-must-be-idiot treatment. I asked to speak to a supervisor and the agent flat out refused. She wasn't done asking me if I had installed the software on the CD. I got mad. Why is it that anger gets a response whereas patience and reason gets you nothing? Why is Verizon training me to be a twitchy maniac yelling into the phone? She conferred in a Network Guy who listened to my story and then had to repeatedly tell the agent that it was not a Customer Problem and she could go ahead and put in the repair order. I get the usual warning and start waiting. It's really no surprise that we haven't got the phones working in Iraq yet.

Last night, the DSL light came on. I picked up the phone; there was just a faint hum. I called the Local Manager who, to his credit, had given me his cell phone number. He said he'd get his boss on it. This morning as I typed this, the DSL light went out and the phone works now. I fully expect that the Local Manager or Local Manager's Boss will tell me to go another round with the DSL People. This is not at all reminiscent of the pictures of smiling people I saw on their website. There it says "Make your internet come to life!" but it doesn't say anything about knocking out the phone.

STEVE BEURET

WEST PHILADELPHIA

CATO VERSUS HANNIBAL

DEAR EDITORS:

I am writing to comment on the lack of public interest spots on television. Fox touts itself as the intrepid reporter on corruption, but they never mention the most corrupt and venal action that they commit, which is never airing public interest spots. I would like to praise one of the most righteous and public-spirited channels on television, one of the only television channels that airs public interest spots. It is the only channel where you will see the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in conjunction with the Ad Council's spot on Art and Children—Channel 48. Channel 48 runs one of the most controversial television shows, "The A-Team." "The A-Team" shows how a few committed individuals can fight the system and win. Yet this station never gets any of the civic accolades that it deserves for being one of the last bastions of democratic American media in the area, standing up for the common man's rights.

GARETH EVANS

WEST PHILADELPHIA

QUIBBLES & BITS

TO THE EDITORS:

Apple's new OS, Panther, is the fanciest new software on the market. Panther promised that my work would be done faster and more efficiently than back in the day when my computer would crash repeatedly and I'd have ten minutes to myself while it started up again. Add up all those minutes and I probably wast-

ed a good half-day of productivity per week. With the Panther's help, though, I suddenly seem to be doing more tasks in the same amount of time. But just how much faster and more efficient is my computer going to get? Is anyone else concerned about this? My computer may have a 2 GHz processor, but I'm not so sure my brain does.

All the same, I love the folks at Apple dearly. I love my Mac. I have iSight, iPod, iDisc, iEverything, and I'm always excited about a new release. But lately, I've been feeling like iNeedSpace. Away from the computer. Away from this constant efficiency. My eyes are starting to hurt, and so are my wrists. I feel as though if someone catches me without my eyes glued to the screen, it'll show up on my year-end review. Panther just made it easier for me in 150+ ways, and suddenly, what I really want are some ways to slow down ... contemplate ... use my pencil—maybe even come up with some good ideas.

Panther does come with several features that seem to be specifically designed to trick my fellow PC co-workers into thinking I'm actually working, when, in fact, I'm just sitting there dragging my cursor back and forth and off to the side, utilizing the new Exposé feature. When that gets boring I can always play with Panther's "fast user switching." The new cube effect, even when I'm just watching it over and over again, always looks magical and cool.

It used to be that folks could wait a week to receive a large file in the mail. Now they either want you to just upload it to their FTP site, just put it on your iDisk, or just FedEx it Priority Overnight. I'm tired of "just." Just email it to me! It'll just take a second! Just throw something together real quick! What I just want to do is crawl under my desk and hide. Seriously, eight and a half hours a day, five days a week, I'm required to sit in a corner with my eyes trained to a computer screen. And now my computer won't even give me a second to think before it does. I miss those days, long ago, pre-Jaguar, when my computer could only burn a CD at a maximum of 4x. Back then, I wasn't even able to access any other programs during the burning process. For me, it meant I had a good solid half-hour to read printed type.

It seems to me that instead of making computers faster and more efficient, technology should be used to make them friendlier to humans. For example, it'd be cool if while my computer was loading, there'd be a special computer sound, which meant it was okay to shut my eyes for thirty seconds or turn around. Then a second sound when it was finished, to alert me to get right back on. What about a feature that made it impossible to log on until I've won a round of Pac-Man? No access until all those pellets are gobbled up. Maybe next year, instead of cougars, panthers, and jaguars trying to out race the last guy, Apple's new OS should be a slower, nicer kind of cat ... like a housecat.

HILARY CAREY

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

A PUZZLING PETITION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing this in an effort to convince the powers that be to make an addition to Bureau of Puzzles & Games page: Cryptograms. I suppose that I am somewhat biased, being an avid fan of Cryptograms myself, however one cannot help but acknowledge the potential benefits for both periodical and reader. Cryptograms are an excellent form of distraction for retail workers, office employees, young professionals and students alike. For the *Independent's* contributors, an unwritten Cryptogram can provide an outlet for that leftover witicism or brief editorial statement, lounging on the cutting-room floor. I can't imagine them being too difficult to create; all one has to do is re-assign letters and voilà!—you've got a puzzle that's not quite as high-end or interdisciplinary as the crossword, and yet a few steps above your mental word jumble on the puzzle ladder. (I mean, come on—all you need is a good pair of eyes to figure out a word jumble). Personally, I've always enjoyed the Cryptogram because it requires a certain amount of luck. Of course there are also tricks and techniques that can and should be applied during individual puzzle sessions. So anyway, it would be great if you could include Cryptograms in your paper sometime in the future.

MARGARET BARTON-FUMO

OLD CITY

The Bureau of Puzzles & Games responds:

DEAR MS. BARTON-FUMO: Let me be the first to invite you to complete the Bureau's maiden Cryptogram on Page Eighteen. I challenge you to complete the puzzle and earn Agent status within the Bureau. I must insist that you not dawdle your work time away struggling with this puzzle. You'll find that this particular cryptogram requires your utmost attention and your mundane work duties will serve only to distract your mind.

HENRY FLOSS

CHAIRMAN, THE BUREAU OF P&G

Katz's Army at Waterloo

from KATZ, page 1

others around him—the stunned, empty thousand-yard stare of the loser.

"I am beyond depressed right now," said Maida. "I have a sick feeling in my stomach."

Still, the party continued. Warwick bartender Dwight Lancaster of Germantown, 42, said he had voted for Street but had no beef with the Katz crowd he was serving.

"We were dead," said Lancaster, referring to the demand for drinks from partygoers as the line steadily increased, "until the numbers started coming in."

But despite the enthusiastic efforts of Johnny O and the diehard party dancers in front of the stage, it was impossible not to feel the implacable sense of defeat about the bright ballroom as supporters speculated on when Katz would concede.

There was no loud party music in the smoking lounge to sanitize the stench of disappointment. Some puffed alone in corner chairs, while others whispered in small clusters as smoke wafted throughout the room amid the hum of an ineffective air filter, permeating any last semblance of hope. A near-mute television broadcasting Johnny O's performance in the ballroom rendered the uncoordinated college-to-middle-age wedding-style dancers ridiculous. On my way out—I didn't stay long—I asked a smiling, middle-aged black man in glasses on his way in how he felt.

"I don't wanna comment right now," he said, fishing for a lighter as a cigarette dangled from his lips.

"But you're needing a cigarette?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, laughing. "And a drink."

Back in the ballroom Johnny O and his dogs reflected the waning enthusiasm with Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On?" I talked with *Metro* columnist Clark DeLeon about what was going on as we waited for Katz's concession. "It's about what I expected," said DeLeon, an affable and surprisingly large and imposing man, regarding the impending Street landslide. A Katz voter, DeLeon conceded that Philadelphia is, at its core, a Democratic town. "What made this race startling was how many people got involved emotionally."

Indeed. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that police recorded some eighty-four incidents of those emotions getting out of control on Election Day, ranging from assaults, disturbances, threats, harassment and vandalism. There was even a brawl at one polling station, but no one at the Katz party, especially after 11 p.m., was in a fighting mood. As svelte television reporters tightened their ties and rehearsed their overzealous smiles before the cameras on the press stage on the west side of the ballroom, Katz volunteers and supporters jockeyed for position on the opposite side with

print reporters beneath the podium where their man was set to concede any minute. They waited and waited.

Finally Katz came out at 11:30 to a screaming, raucous applause. Chants started and spread throughout the cheering room: "Sam in '07! Sam in '07!" and "Sam! Sam! Sam!"

Katz silenced the crowd and delivered a calm, sincere concession speech, saying being mayor of Philadelphia was "the only job I ever wanted." At the mere suggestion that Street was a formidable opponent, the crowd boomed and hissed with the venomous, collective anger of a disgruntled population.

"He stole the election!" yelled one woman. Cheers and applause.

"No class!" yelled one bellicose man, "No class!"

"Homophobe!"

"Sam in '07!"

"We love you Sam...."

After the Katz concession, the press turned off their lights and broke down their equipment. Already, rainbow "Pride for Katz" posters and other campaign paraphernalia littered the floor. No more music. The crowd emptied out. Some comatose, dejected supporters sauntered out into the damp humidity of defeat like malnourished goats, while others, fueled by alcohol, camaraderie and the relief in at least knowing they'd tried their best—their absolute best—to elect a man they truly believed in, departed in celebratory groups, their arms around one another, stopping here to offer a tissue to a fellow campaign worker, there to hug a fellow volunteer they'd surely kept in touch with.

I ran into Johnny O—a short man with a raspy voice wearing black and white wing tips and an oversized fedora—in a back room (his band mates were breaking down the equipment).

"I'm sorry," he said through his sandpaper throat, rubbing his eyes. "I've got these allergies acting up. Ugh."

Originally from 42nd and Girard, Johnny now lives in West Palm Beach. I asked him if, despite the fact that he can't vote in Philadelphia, he was a Katz supporter.

"Yeah," said Johnny. He leaned close to me. "See, I know Street—from back in the day...."

And there he stopped and took a drag from his cigarette and gave me a look that suggested he knew our mayor in ways I and all the voters there that night and throughout the city, for that matter, could never know.

"But," he said, looking away, disinterested, "I guess the best man won."

Bernard Vaughan received his master's degree in journalism from Temple University. He is a frequent contributor to THE INDEPENDENT. He can be reached via email at vaughanbernard@hotmail.com.

SPIRAL Q'S PEOPLEHOOD

PHOTOS BY WENDY JANE HYATT



From this year's Peoplehood, an annual community parade and pageant in West Philadelphia.

Mayor John Street's Winning Team

Partying Hard with the Best & the Brightest.

from STREET, page 1

attempt to bring the gospel of Street to potential voters, I am ushered back downstairs into the main room. Grace thanks me again for my "help," still maintaining the elated man-child grin he has had all evening, while cutting off circulation in the lower part of my arm with the bone-grinding pressure of his handshake. "There's nothing going on here anymore," he tells me firmly. "I'm on my way over to the counting room, which is where the votes come in... have you met up with Harry yet?" I shake my head. "Try his cell," Grace counsels over his shoulder as he leaves. "Thanks again!"

I leave the building, because there is nothing left to do, and wander around the business district for a few minutes to gather my thoughts before putting another phone call in to the elusive Harry B. Cook, my supposed contact for this article. When I get him on the phone, he asks where I am. "The corner of 18th and the Parkway, but I can walk back to IBEW 98 if you want to meet there," I tell him. I am ordered to "stay put," before the connection is cut. From my station on the corner, I watch the cars flash across the Parkway, headlights blurred by the fine mist settling over the city, and worry about things like getting arrested for attempted prostitution, catching cold, and the mess the precipitation will undoubtedly make of my hair. Waiting for strangers on a street corner just never seems like a good idea.

There is a honk across the street, from an SUV decorated with red, white and blue John Street signs. I attempt to get a better look at the person inside the vehicle before crossing the street and getting inside, but before I can give the matter serious attention, the driver calls out, "Hello, Ms. Hunt."

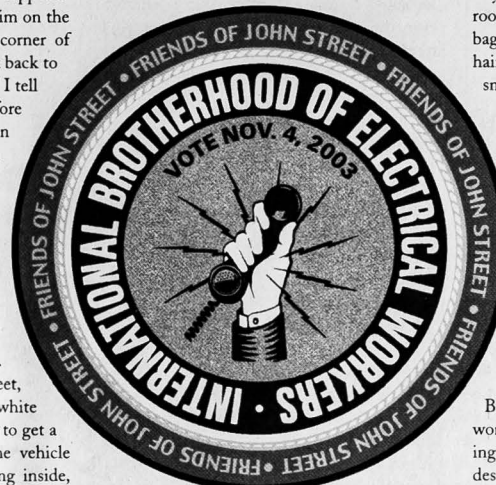
I'm hoping the speaker is Harry B. Cook, because I cross the street and climb into the backseat, wiping the rain from my face. "Hi, I'm Harry," he says, shaking my hand. He wears a natty white sweatshirt-and-hat ensemble matching that of his buddy, who pokes his head out from the passenger's seat to tell me even before I have a chance to buckle my seatbelt that everything he says is strictly off the record. "Why, who are you?" I ask, taking pains to match my level of professional tact to his. He provides a name that I could have told him would mean absolutely nothing to me, and then shakes my hand. I promptly re-name him "Off The Record."

The top secret inside scoop is that Cook and Off The Record are driving back to Local 98 to pick up some other person before heading over to the counting room, which is alternately referred to as "Headquarters," "H.Q.," "the War Room," and "the Boiler Room," which I will henceforth refer to as "the Room Of Many Names." Both of their cell phones ring constantly, and they shout things like, "Thirty-six" and "Fifty-four!" and "Holy shit!" Also, whenever they are stopped at a traffic light and a black person walks or drives by the Streetmobile, they shout out the window, "Whassup, you vote for Street?" or simply, "Streetec!" Between all of these eruptions, Cook apologizes for setting me up to be a volunteer at Local 98. "Sorry. I knew we'd be desperate," he says. "But, thank-you-so-much-for-helping-that-was-really-nice!" Then I get a brief version of that smile developed by people whose livelihood depends upon other people thinking they're okay human beings and therefore trustworthy. Cook's is less polished than Grace's, and with a slight variation. Whereas Grace gives off a steady beam of unbounded, almost freakish joy that great people want to help a great cause, Cook is more the high school quarterback paying dutiful attention to the charity-case homecoming queen nominee during spirit week because he's just that kind of guy. "I wish you could have been out in the field with us," he tells me as we pull up in front of Local 98. "It was a lot more exciting. I've been up for three days straight pulling this stuff together."

Into the SUV tumbles a kid in a gray-brown suit and red-and-gold power tie: not too wide, not too skinny. This is "the Face Of Young Democracy" or "the Face" for short, a University of Pennsylvania sophomore who may be up for the vice-presidency of the elite campus Young Democrats Something-or-Other next year. My first thought is that this kid looks too young to be anywhere near a suit like that, much less inside one. My second thought is that we have about ten seconds before the Face starts frothing at the mouth, gibbering nonsense, and jerking around uncon-

trollably like a Pentecostal with a bellyful of God. He appears to find Election Night very, very exciting, and his agitation is not helped by the fact that our destination is none other than the Room Of Many Names, to which Cook promises to try to score us guest passes. Cook and Off The Record resume spouting off numbers and district names. The Face seems to know what they're talking about, because his preexisting condition of near-rabid lather worsens as he shrieks, "Thirty-six percent in Fishtown? No! That's Katz territory! That's white guy town! Oh, wow! Thirty-six, thirty ... that's incredible!"

Before Cook has a chance to park the vehicle, Off The Record opens the passenger's side door and runs off in the direction of the Street campaign's headquarters, the building that houses the Room Of Many Names.



"Okay, guys. I'm going to try to get you in, but it might not work, so just be cool, all right?" Cook tells the Face and me as we enter the building.

"Thirty-six percent!" the Face raves, spraying spittle. "Fishtown!" He doesn't appear to be wearing a retainer, but one can easily guess at its presence back in the dorm room, reclining like a monogrammed oyster in its plastic case.

Not surprisingly, access to the Room Of Many Names is denied to the Face and myself, so Harry B. Cook gives us a tour of his office, which is located on the same floor as the Room Of Many Names, as a consolation prize. "This is my office. And this is Off The Record's office, where I usually hang out instead of mine. Exciting, right?" I laugh politely at what I take to be sarcasm on Cook's part, but the Face nods with hysterical vigor. Cook gazes longingly towards the Room Of Many Names while trying to sneak in answers between the questions the Face fires off at him. "I'm going to go in there, okay? Just go over to the Wyndham and check out the party." With that, Harry B. Cook makes his escape between the transparent glass doors of the Room Of Many Names, where men in suits walk briskly back and forth across the small office for reasons that must remain forever opaque to me.

The Face is walking so fast I can't keep up with him. As I follow him out of the building and down the street, a guard motions us through a series of subterranean concrete corridors that lead us into the cavernous beige ballroom of the Wyndham hotel. The Face Of Young Democracy's pace forces me to trot ten-plus paces behind him as he strides furiously towards what he must think is his destiny or something. That's how fast he's walking. The Face disappears into a sea of suits just like his. I have been ditched like someone's buck-toothed cousin at another school's prom.

Ignoring the cheese-and-water-crackers buffet spread out in the lobby, I scout out the territory for the familiar safety zone of a ladies' bathroom. I need to recover from being blown off by a 19-year-old with saliva control issues and regroup before facing the rest of the party alone. When I emerge from a stall, there are two women perched on a sofa in front of a long mirror. Both are bleached blondes in tight black pants, stiletto heels, and sequins; both smoke long, skinny cigarettes; both are laughing about how boring this party is. "We can smoke in here?" I ask them, while utilizing the mirror to re-apply my lip-gloss. "There are ashtrays out in the lobby, but who wants to stand out there?" the older of the two women tells me, and both resume laughing.

I return to the lobby, but I don't see any ashtrays, so I hit up the buffet and find an ornate backless sofa thing, where I nibble Muenster

and observe the festivities in the ballroom from an inconspicuous corner. A man in a suit sits down on the other end of the sofa and scribbles in a sleek black leather-covered notebook with a gold-plated pen clipped onto the cover. There are a lot of note-takers in attendance. Not all of their telltale journalistic accoutrements are as slick as the ones held by the man sharing my inconspicuous corner. Some carry plain-colored notebooks with Bics jammed into the spiral wire binding, others have pocket-sized checkbook-looking numbers, and a few have silver-trimmed power accessories that could probably have been purchased from the same vendor where my silent friend on the sofa bought his gear. All look appropriately lean and hungry, but also exhausted, not knowing which hand should hold their cocktails and which the extra luggage.

Sitting gets old, so I strike out for the ashtray area, which I have spotted from across the room. A goateed guy in a jersey and huge baggy pants and his lady friend, whose blonde hair boasts almost two inches of dark roots, smile self-consciously before stubbing out their menthol cigarettes and taking off in the direction of the cheese spread. There are all types at this party. There's a man with red-tipped dreadlocks bouncing on the laps of his pin-striped suit, a woman in sweatpants leading a toddler with one hand and bracing an infant against her hip with another, an old man in a wheelchair wearing a John Street sweatshirt with a Howard Dean pin, a pair of enormous red-haired men who look like brothers and wear matching t-shirts that read "American by Birth ... Teamster by the Grace of God," a woman who looks like a fashion model teetering on spike heels and clutching a brown designer handbag that matches perfectly the shade of her skirted suit, and a tall, thin young couple dressed in sober professional clothes who seem to see no one but each other. It's nice to be at a public party that looks like a public party. Every possible shade of skin, brand of shoes, and drink of choice is represented somewhere in the Franklin Wyndham Plaza Hotel tonight, and it's impossible not to catch a contact high from the combined energies of so many different types of people.

Then, out of nowhere, there's a little guy in a suit coming my direction. I cringe. He looks like a variation on the Face. It gets worse when he opens his mouth: "Hey, don't I know you from somewhere?" I look at him blankly, wondering where these little guys get suits small enough to fit them. This one looks like he's about twelve. But then: "A bunch of us are getting drinks downstairs in the bar, want to come?" Furthermore, by the time the escalator reaches the level where the bar is, this guy has drilled me on who I am, where I work, where I went to school, why I'm here, what kind of article I want to write, what kind of article I usually write, where I like to hang out, and what I drink. I haven't even gotten his name yet. This is how he comes to be called "Slick Ricky."

In the bar, I'm relieved to find Slick Ricky and his friends drinking beer and complaining about how stupid this party is and how much they want to leave. I'm introduced in that make-friends-and-influence-people manner to five or six young men and women roughly my own age. It turns out that they all work for the same fundraising firm. Handshakes all around. Slick Ricky hands me a beer and helps me sniff out the "Human Element." This phrase denotes the nonpolitical aspects of this political gathering, the aspects I'm interested in. Saying it out loud to someone my own age gives it an conspiratorial inflection of irony, so now of course neither of us can stop talking about the "Human Element," and snickering.

"Okay, that's the big union boss in the flag tie." Slick Ricky discreetly points out a large man in a slightly rumpled suit, sure enough, sporting a loud, wide tie printed with several overlapping flags. "I don't know about that tie, though." Slick Ricky shakes his head. "No way, that's what a union boss is supposed to look like," I tell him. "Very Human Element."

"Well, did you know that Lynne Abraham rides a motorcycle? That's Human Element," Slick Ricky divulges. "She does?" his co-worker pipes up, in the middle of riffling through her tiny red plaid handbag. "Is that Burberry's?" asks another female fundraiser, who has been standing hunched over an ashtray at the bar between Slick Ricky and Burberry Bag, sneaking a cigarette out of her boss's view. "Hey, I hear there's an open bar at the Katz party," says another young man. "Where did you steal that pen?" Slick Ricky

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Carrots and Sticks in Cairo

from ARAB, page 1

1976 Fiat are worth gambling their life upon. The novice Western passenger will cringe as his driver often fails to slow up for pedestrians, who inevitably escape with their legs intact, but often only by a foot or two.

Your run-of-the-mill Cairo vehicle is a boxy Fiat manufactured back in the lifetime of former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, which, you will recall, ended in 1981. These Fiats were apparently manufactured in Egypt, and they're joined by a pollution-belching panoply of similarly dated vehicles; some old Peugeots and Renaults and a host of off-brand Egyptian makes, all with the same retro design: the Lada, the Tohas, the Nasr, and the Seat. Nabil, the kind fellow who ferried me to and from the airport, was driving just such an automobile, a black Fiat—they're all this color, I think—older than me, whose interior, complete with a thirty-year-old taxi meter the size of a small toaster—would be fit for exhibition at some kind of Museum of Taxi History, should such a magical place come into existence. Tony Danza may have driven a similar vehicle back on television. Nabil was, I think, having some problems with the old workhorse, because on the way into Cairo, he had to restart the car each time we went over a speed bump. The problem must have deepened during my stay, because during our hurried trip back to the airport, we had to pull over again and again so Nabil could lift up the hood and take a wrench to something underneath.

In the last few years, the police—who are omnipresent on the streets, with Egypt ruled by an unpopular martial law regime, kept in place by billions of your tax dollars each year—began to take the unheard-of step of enforcing some kind of seat belt law; this in a place where most of the cars surely predate the invention of the seat belt. Clever taxi drivers have outfitted their vehicles with a strap that very much resembles a seat belt, right down to the flat metal hook hung at the end; however, there is no buckle to secure it. The driver, if he is conscientious, will take the belt and drape it over your chest, with an instruction for you hold it in place at your waist.

The crowds on the Arab Street are palatable, and the maniacal driving may be the finest in the world. Even the least carefree of white men will come to enjoy striding confi-

dently into four—or eight—lanes of onrushing traffic to cross to the other side. But the opinions that lie there, they are of a more disturbing tone. The Egyptians who fill the rusting automobiles and the overflowing sidewalks are indeed teeming with discontent, and eager to file their complaints with a real live American should one materialize in front of them.

One need only spend two or three minutes in Egypt in order to realize that our vaunted campaign to win the hearts and minds of the Arab world is as useless as the cosmetic seat belt in your Cairo taxi. I had been in Egypt for all of three and a half minutes when a young man at the airport baggage carousel, to whom I happened to say hello, began to deliver what would become a familiar lecture.

"Boosh," he said, shaking his head, "Boosh is a monster. He is terrible, evil man. What is he doing in Iraq?" It was only hours earlier that the Palestinian cab driver who took me to the Tel Aviv airport gave me his version of the lecture, and only a day before that a farmer in the West Bank city of Qalqilya, standing in front of the newly built wall which has confiscated most of his farmland, told me: "Bush and Blair come to our countries and fuck us up? I will come to Washington, and fuck you up too." Afterwards he thanked me for interviewing him and gave me some grapes. One day later, here I am strolling around the pyramids like a good tourist, gamely rejecting the endless Egyptian appeals to purchase souvenir plastic pyramids or cold drinks; the kid who's trying to sell me soda from a metal bucket, no older than fifteen, catches up to two American girls in front of me. It goes like this:

"Soda?"

"No."

"Where are you from?"

"America." (Big mistake.)

"Sharon, Sharon is criminal."

"Who is Sharon?"

"Sharon, he is monster."

"Sharon? Who? What are you talking about?"

"Boosh, Boosh is terrible man."

"Oh, Bush, yes, yes."

I started to tell the cab drivers I was from Canada. I'm ashamed of this, but it sure made things easier.

The "Arab Street" entered the American vernacular as code for the seething mass of rage pent up underneath our despotic satraps in

Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Beware! it was said—American recklessness will inflame the Levantine mobs, and our puppet strongmen will be toppled like so many Shahs of Iran. But on we rushed into the mountains of Afghanistan, and such revolt did not come to pass. The first narrative was discarded: the Arab Street is a fraud, a paper tiger, the pundits crowed. So we carried on with our important work, turning our attention to Iraq, confident that there was no popular revolt to be feared. Today the American consensus is that while we must not let fear of the Street dictate our actions, we shall not ignore the Street, so we talk nice to the Arab world while we work our rough business in Baghdad. We speak endlessly of the carrots that never materialize, while the sticks are all too real, and acutely perceived. We bomb one country to bring about democracy, and fund its suppression in another. We may find this arrangement soothing to our fears, but it fools no one but us.

The bombing of Afghanistan did not set the Arab Street aflame, but it laid a tinderbox of discontent for which our invasion and occupation of Iraq is a ready match. As we speak, forty-three Egyptian men, most in their 20s and 30s, many of them engineers, doctors, and teachers, are sitting in jail, charged with plotting to attack Western targets in Cairo. The government claims they are members of Islamic Jihad; but the organization has all but ceased to exist in Egypt; according to reports by Hossam el-Hamalawy, a Cairo journalist who has thoroughly investigated the arrests, exiled Jihad members deny it as well. None of the accused have prior political or criminal records; they have had no contact with al-Qaeda, with bin Laden or his lieutenants; this even the Egyptian government admits. These men are freelancers, amateur terrorists, and they are the look of the future. In an age when the obstacles to such terrorist organization have diminished considerably—the Internet provides nearly all of the ideology and know-how tomorrow's suicide bomber needs—the seething resentment of hundreds of millions is nothing to be complacent about. When the jihadis return to America—and it may not be long—pretending to be from Toronto will be no use at all.

Jonathan Shainin is Books Editor at THE INDEPENDENT.

URGED EYE

Urged eye, you are a green blob on my night scope.
I shimmy your shut-eye, proposition your hooch.
How fair is it that you can snuff me up-close
While I bomb?

—LINH DINH

INFANTRY

I crawl on skin knees wet parachute.
My chocolate chips camouflage my toy gun.
Bilge water crazy boobs seawage.
I shoot not straight I aim.
I liberate nothing.

—LINH DINH

METRONAUT

TAKING AN INDEFINITE LEAVE OF ABSENCE

dispatch

REPORT FROM TANGIER

My Quest for the Elusive Moroccan Crown

By JONATHAN EPHRAIM UNDERHILL

EDITOR'S NOTE: This missive from our Mr. Underhill was shipped out in mid-summer, and for a thousand reasons of little interest to the curious reader, it has only now been trimmed, expanded, and generally got fit for the consumption of the public. Mr. Underhill remains in North Africa, and his letters have begun to pile up; thus, the sooner these antiques are gotten into print, the sooner we can catch up to current events.

I am corresponding from the city of Tangier in Morocco, which sits as it has for two and a half millennia on the narrowest waterways of the Straits of Gibraltar. It is a city on a slope, so the water is visible from every vantage in town, between every French Art-Deco relic. And beyond the water is Spain, thrillingly close, so much so that with the fall of night, the twinkling lights of Tarifa can be seen from beneath Tangier's own. The occasion for my report, though I think I scarcely need one, is my recent series of encounters with the beloved King of this country, Mohammed VI (uttered in the French manner, as is the custom in this former colony, his name sounds like 'Mohammed sees').

It is sound advice to any author that he begin with his audience's knowledge ends; that his first step be into the uncharted ignorance of his readership, or else the rest of his labor will be both useless and unread. As such, I will necessarily start this account of my royal acquaintance with the likely startling news that Morocco indeed has a king, and is even today ruled happily by him. (This might be already beyond the scope of a few of the better ill-informed, who are not sure where Morocco is, or if it is contagious, but for them, there is not enough hope to squander.)

Mohammed VI, His Majesty the King of Morocco, is a dashing youngster of forty, the latest in a long line known to history as the Alouite dynasty, which has ruled the Maghreb since the seventeenth century; and also the most modern embodiment of the so-called 'shereef.' Mohammed VI, like every Moroccan potentate before him, is a direct descendant of the prophet Mohammed.

He is also an avid sportsman upon the jet-ski, that menace to nautical tranquility; an enthusiastic fisherman; a devoted skier, when the season is conducive; a tall, fit heart-throb for the femmes; and an economic liberal, with as much Rooseveltian socialism in him as any regent could conceivably have, without renouncing his crown entirely. For these reasons he is the best thing to have happened to the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism in a generation, because prior to Mohammed's accession, who in the world knew that one could even go skiing in North Africa?

The king's photograph is seen everywhere, in every shop, on billboards along every avenue. In bait-shops, the King is pictured angling; at beach snack-bars, he is pictured jet-skiing; in banks, he is neatly and handsomely dressed in business attire. He sometimes sports a close, neat beard, which seems as if it might have been a short-lived attempt to mask the faint infidelity of his visage—he is big-eared and smooth-faced. The beard, now gone, rather looked like that of an adolescent desperate for premature masculinity. All the same, Mohammed VI has been a darling of the Mediterranean singles scene for years, and last year's royal marriage was received in the editorial offices of the French fashion magazines as an event equal to the death of Adonis himself.

Mohammed VI ascended to the throne just four years ago, upon the death of his father, King Hassan II (deux). Hassan II had reigned since the 1960s, and was generally well-liked, though nobody will deny his reputation for occasional ruthlessness, when it served his purposes. His son, on the other hand, has become known as a great modernizer, a relative free-thinker, and the Arab world's most outspoken humanitarian. The first Arab nation to recognize Israel, Morocco's governors can be seen in the background of just about every handshake photograph taken in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Morocco, under Mohammed VI, has initiated housing and educational programs unrivaled in Africa or the Middle East—an excursion even to the edge of the Sahara Desert will reveal vast acres of rising housing projects intended to settle the squalid, near-nomadic populations that have traditionally been the

destabilizing force throughout the Third World. A telecommunications network has been installed, in the form of a government-regulated private monopoly, that is equal to even the gregarious Spaniards'. Morocco has essentially *skipped* the telephone land-line era, and portable phones are now as common in the packs upon camels as they are upon Italian Vespas in the streets of Rome.

The decidedly more difficult challenge of reforming education is Mohammed's stated priority in his next four years; Moroccans' perhaps unmatched linguistic capabilities are equaled only by their surprising illiteracy statistics. Moroccans will generally be fluent in four or five languages, and not be able to read any of them. Moroccan Arabic itself—a variation of Modern Standard Arabic—does not even have an accepted written form to learn.

All of this happy news, however, is beside the point of my epistle. It is mid-July as I write (see the editorial note above), and the king is here in Tangier with me, preparing to celebrate his happiest week. On July 23rd, he will celebrate his first wedding anniversary, to Her Highness the Princess Salma Bennani; and on the 28th, it will be the fourth anniversary of Mohammed's accession to the throne of the kingdom of Morocco.

The Princess, his newlywed wife, is a former computer engineering student, the daughter of a university professor—quite the modern feminine for a society of patriarchy. Beyond all that, she is the first wife of a Moroccan king to ever be identified before she was married; the Moroccan crown has such a profound history of secrecy that the king's wives were not known about until the ceremony was complete, and the assassins all thwarted. Mohammed and Salma, on the other hand, were the toast of the Mediterranean press, and their mere existence as such is perhaps one of the Islamic world's most pronounced gesture toward Westernization.

And Mohammed and his beloved Salma can get away with all this relative libertinism without aggravating the famous Fundamentalists, who have lately seemed to hold the whole of the Arab world in their raving paws. For the King of Morocco, as Mohammed's descendant, occupies all the religious high ground he needs against the traditionalizing forces of the Muslim world. Moroccans, politically moderate, socially progressive, also consider themselves to be the truest Muslims, direct subjects of the Commander of the Faithful. The small number of Fundamentalists that are in Morocco have no rhetorical legs to stand on. And the social and political squalor that would be their second pillar of persuasion is being systematically mended by the young King's activism.

Entering Tangier by train, I was ignorant of the impending holidays, and it fell to my taxi-driver to explain all the banners and lights up along the main boulevards of the city. From the dusty outskirts where the locomotive dumps its charges into the aging glamour of the Ville Nouvelle, my hack struggled to make me understand that this week there were two anniversaries—and that neither was the King's birthday. French—Morocco's second language—lacks the vocabulary for much specificity when it comes to a celebration—a party is a party, *une anniversaire est une anniversaire*. Besides this syntactical difficulty, I remained unable to pronounce the King's title—*le roi*—without hyperventilating and passing out. Just as I think I have got it pronounced correctly, and have still got my consciousness, my confabulated driver demanded that I try and speak French.

Regardless, I asked if the King would be making a public appearance during his celebra-

tory stay in Tangier, and the driver, all-knowing, assured me that he would the very next morning. Tangier comes out in a throng to greet their leader, and I expressed my desire to join them—I had never met with a king before, and I expected better things after my lifetime of disappointment from presidents, prime ministers, generals, despots, shop-stewards, and maitre d's.

The King of Morocco maintains a palace, or two or three, in every Moroccan city of any import. And it is de rigueur for the wayward tourist to find the royal palace in any given town, and find that he may not enter into it. As these immensities are generally close to the center of town, they become tremendous obstacles to the foot-borne touring of most important Moroccan cities. I had, thus, circumnavigated every Royal Palace in Morocco, at the expense of dozens of hours of sun-baked walking, and I was sure that the Royal Guard has begun to notice me, and wondered at my relentless casing of the Royal Joins. I had only tried not to peek through gates and peer through cracks in the walls, but by trying not to look guilty of anything, I knew too well that I had made myself look ten times more criminal than I am.

So on the date of the King's wedding anniversary, I walked the long way up to the top of the hill that Tangier rests below, to find the Royal Palace, and to join the unsuspicious, adoring masses of Morocco. No such masses appeared, however, and I was quite soon at the gate of the palace—clothed entirely by red and green canvas banners, as to make the fence opaque from just such prying eyes as mine—alone with a contingent of gendarmes, Royal Guards, and what appeared to be idling commando soldiers.

Now I must return to my excuses, as far as my lingual abilities are concerned. In Morocco several languages are spoken regularly: Moroccan Arabic, Berber, and French especially—though none capably by your author. My problem has been that these languages are generally spoken, by the natives, *simultaneously*. To listen to Moroccans speaking with one another is to learn *nothing* about their tongue, except that it is double-jointed. A single sentence will include words from two, three, or four languages at once, and so the moment the eavesdropper thinks he has figured out that a fellow is speaking French, he will hear a few words he is sure are Arabic, or a phrase that is as surely Spanish as it is a phrase at all. Thus, a traveller who is not fluent when he lands at Casablanca will never enjoy an education while he is here. And so it was that I had arrived in Tangier, after a month in the country, with my French still atrociously unpracticed, my Arabic just better than nonexistent.

But I deemed nevertheless to approach the least-heavily armed of the King's guards and demanded to know when Mohammed would be emerging to address the people.

"At what time will the King come out?" The guard set his hand upon his rifle and asked me to repeat myself. A mustachioed captain, within the fence, fingered his pistol and began to approach us, to see if he could be of any help. To them both I asked again, in the most lilting, fluttering Gallic I could muster, "At what time will the King come outside?" At the word, *'le roi'*, my head buzzed with oxygen deprivation.

Who? *"Le wah. Le r-wah. Mohammed sees."*

I offered, further, that I would like to see the King. I lacked the capacity to boast of my authorial reputation and to explain my impressive literary credentials. So without any elaboration, I must have seemed like nothing better than a suitor of the Beaver's, pining for play-time.

I was informed that the King's anniversary

party—indeed there were red and green tents dotting the walled grounds of the palace—was by invitation only. Could I go in? Not if I wasn't invited. Would he give a speech? Not as far as the soldiers knew. My taxi driver had been lying, or else saying something entirely different than what I suspected—in fact, I now heard him more clearly in retrospect, saying something foreboding about *next week*. With fading expectations, I asked the captain if I would have any opportunity to see the King while we were both in Tangier. He laughed and shook my hand, either because my inadvertent frankness impressed him, or he feared I might be some sort of idiot relation to Mohammed, and he didn't want to offend me, lest I return at some point from within the palace, Mohammed the King on my arm, jovial and familial. The captain, smiling, told me he would pass on my wishes for a happy anniversary, if I did not return with an invitation. That day, I would not see his majesty.

Five days later it was the second of the King's anniversaries, this one commemorating the date of his accession to the throne, four years ago. Every night that week, Tangier had been pulsing with lights and pedestrians, everything red and green. A commercial festival was being held in conjunction with Mohammed's visit, and Moroccans were out among the shops, pretending to buy things, though more things were the last of the Tangerine's needs. Nobody gave me any further indication that Mohammed would make a public appearance here—though Moroccans were sympathetic, saying that the King must be at home tending to his newborn son, the four-month old Prince Moulay Hassan, the focus of still more editorial squealing and national pride.

So I spent the 28th a few miles outside the city, along the Atlantic coast beyond Cape Spartel, where I was surprised to discover yet another Royal Palace complex, newly constructed, and not mentioned on any map or bothered about by any road-sign. This sprawling pleasure ranch was set directly upon the windy shore, on a field of meticulously maintained grass which wanted nothing more than to die on its shallow, sandy roots, but was thwarted hourly by groundkeepers as steady as the seasons. In a landscape of windblown scrub, sand, and rock, the green swath of the palace grounds looked quite like a golf course retrieved from the desert at the great expenditure of country-club fees—and in fact, Mohammed VI is an avid golfer, as well.

This palace also happened to have been built directly on the site of the ancient Roman village of Cotta, one of the old Empire's North African hamlets, devoted at one time to the servile production of sardine-paste, much loved by the denizens of the capital. I admit to a sort of buffery in the matter of ancient ruins, and find that no hike is too troublesome if it winds up amid the crumb-hills of an extinct civilization.

So it was that I wandered the windy shore-roads toward Cotta, and found myself, surprisingly, at the gates of another Royal Palace, confronted with yet another platoon of various guardsmen, police-officers, soldiers, and stray cats. I pointed, idiot-wise, at my map, to prove that their palace was misplaced, and the captain here merely informed me that the palace was very new, the map, not so. These fellows, however, had none of the joviality of the city-guards. I sensed that I had found a thing they would have been just as happy to have kept to themselves.

With a stubbornness that I suppose has benefited my career the more-so than those aspirant authors who are not published in such a prestigious place as this Paper, I demanded access to the ruins of Cotta, whether they were on the King's land or not. These guards now pointed along the endless wall of the complex, and said I could go to the ruin if I would only walk the circumference of the King's ranch, and inquire at the far gate. Behind the guard's outstretched arm, through the ajar gate, I saw the sea, the beach, a long dirt road, and clear as a vision, a crumble of Roman remains.

"The ruin is right there. Can't I go in this gate?"

The finger pointed, I must circumnavigate the wall. This would be a walk of an extra mile and a half, though as a bird flies, the ruin was not two hundred yards away. But I have hardly begun on the matter of Moroccan bureaucracy—the fact is that the entire country seems to have been inspired by the labors of Hercules

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asks him. "I didn't steal it, I bought it all by myself," he says, all smiles. "I got cards, baby! I got cards you don't even know about! Lots of 'em, too!" Mock-impressed oohs and ahs all around. "You know that pen's going to leak and there'll be a big ink spot on his shirt," says Burberry Bag. "He'll just buy another one with his cards," replies Sneaky Cigarettes, laughing.

Despite certain differences in accessories, alma maters, and account balances, these kids behave very similarly to my own friends. I can see by the way their glances target the television screen above the bar every thirty seconds that they care about the outcome of the election, although all take turns displaying their individual lacks of enthusiasm. "Street won," Slick Ricky says, shrugging and rolling his eyes. "It's over. Let's go walk around, I'll introduce you to everyone I know."

This is exactly what he does. We take the curved escalator that snakes up two stories of open space back to the ballroom level, and after that, everything happens so fast it's impossible to keep track. Slick Ricky walks almost as fast as the Face, but I am expected to keep up as he weaves his around the ballroom, which is growing more crowded by the second. Every so often, we stop and I shake hands with someone, say hello, and quicken my pace to avoid missing Slick Ricky's rapid-fire commentary, which usually involves his private value judgments on jobs, personalities, and ties. Clearly, Slick Ricky is my new best friend for life, but I couldn't say how or why this came about. It's not political or professional, seeing as I don't know anyone or even much about what is going on here. One of the people I'm introduced to is Slick Ricky's girlfriend, an adorable freckly blonde, so it's not sexual. My best guess is that Slick Ricky just likes to entertain himself by adopting strangers at boring parties. I'm enjoying it, but I also want to drink another beer and Slick Ricky isn't the type to wait around, so we bid each other a fond farewell-for-now.

En route to the bar, I run into my friend Adam, who is working as part of a crew filming a documentary about the election. "You have to come meet these guys. They're awesome, and they gave us free drink tickets so we'd interview them!" he says. "Who were they?" I ask. "Oh, just guys. Politician guys. You'll see, they're cool," I am told. With his tripod, video camera, and co-worker in tow, Adam leads me through the crowd. "There's one!" says his co-worker. "Wasn't that one of the guys?" This is how I meet A.J. Thompson, a former candidate for the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

In the initial stages of my conversation with Thompson, I accidentally drop an entirely gratuitous F-Bomb. It's one of those occasions where the word is used not as verb, adjective, or noun, but just sort of inserted into a sentence at random and with no higher purpose than obnoxious shock value. This could be ascribed to the fact that it has been a long night of good behavior and my social skills have always been a bit roughshod, but more specifically, I feel comfortable in the presence of Thompson. He kind of looks like my dad, and he talks about Fishtown with the infectious enthusiasm of an elementary school intramural soccer coach. Furthermore, after my inadvertent slip into the realm of casual language, Thompson is more than willing to move the

entire conversation there. "I said 'hell' in an interview tonight!" he tells me cheerfully. "I don't give a shit about these parties. I'm doing a community spelling bee tomorrow, though, and I can't wait for that." Then he points out a few people who are "assholes." Adam and I are loving this. We want to hear more about spelling bees and kiddie football leagues. We want to hang out at Thompson's house; he issues an open invitation to do just that. It's more than that, though. For at least the duration of this conversation and the several minutes that follow his departure, we want him to be the guy in charge. Would either of us make it our lives' work to see that he becomes the guy in charge? Doubtful, but I'm beginning to understand why politics are so seductive.

There is not a single person involved in the Street campaign present tonight who can say that their actions—informed by their opinions and delivered inside the careful constructs that are their public personae—did not matter. By taking an active part in the political aspects of their surroundings, at the end of Election Night these go-getters and hand-shakers leave not only with the glow of having won their battle, but also with the secure knowledge that this particular battle has a concrete, applied purpose that affects others. The event barely contained inside the double-tiered ballroom at the Franklin Wyndham Plaza Hotel on Election Night might look like a party, sound like a party, and behave like a party, but its true purpose is to provide a festive backdrop for the mass-scale personal validation of those involved with the election.

Many faces in the crowd have similar expressions of joyous catharsis as they see their past several months' worth of anxiety and hard work dissolve into triumphant applause. Some dance, despite the fact that the music has stopped. Others are fully absorbed in yelling slogans such as, "Four more years!" while waving four fingers in the direction of Street, who has just mounted the stage. I can't see much in the main room during Street's victory speech, but I pick out Harry B. Cook in the crowd, drinking a lager in his white Street sweatshirt, and the shit-eating grin on his face is about fifty times more genuine and charming than the tired, halfhearted baring of teeth he was flashing earlier in the evening. There is a huge glut of people pressed up against the stage, cheering uproariously every time Street delivers one of his signature Bob Fosse-esque pinned-elbows palms-up shrug-that's-not-a-shrug moves. I'm convinced that's the only way people know when to clap, because Street's voice is amplified into the crowd from the public address system in muddy, near-unintelligible tones. To hear what he is saying, one needs to check out one of the several huge-screen televisions stationed around the ballroom. The sound on television is better, but there's also about a half second's lag before the real-life cheers coming from the ballroom are joined by the cheers on the broadcast's audio track. The crowd is thinning out even as Street speaks.

Slick Ricky makes his way through the crowd and stops to shake my hand and give me a half-hug that seems free of ulterior agendas before he leaves. "Now you know everything!" he says. "I'm around. I'll come find you." This makes me smile, but he's out the door before I have a chance to ask why, or for what.

Loren Hunt is an editor and staff writer at THE INDEPENDENT.

FLOWERS

Peony, peony, why are you ashamed?
My head is so large, the showiest in the garden.

Lily of the valley, what makes you so cruel?
The crowd of us, all so lovely on the stem together.

Prim tulips, screw you, the whole line of you.
Why do you bother us? Why don't you leave us alone?

Dogwood, how is it to float in the fragrant air?
The branch is heavy with us. It can barely hold us.

Iris, lonely on your endless stem, what's the use?
Breathe. I must breathe. I must carry with pride the bead of dew.

Highly admired rose, how is it in the vase?
Closer, closer. I want to strangle you.

Pansies, my loves, darlings of the window box.
Does nobody see our stunned eyes, our little frowns?

Violets, wherefore art thou? Embroidered
on the lawn by God, to be cut and trampled.

Magenta rhododendron, aren't you ashamed?
We've gone insane. We can't help ourselves.

Spring bouquet, shall I double you at the mirror?
How miserable we are. How crowded and lonesome.

—MOLLY RUSSAKOFF

turn to TANGIER, page 16



BEST TO RIP IT OUT, OR JUST BUILD OVER IT?

HOW COLLECTIONS & MISSIONS ADAPT

from FOUNDERS, page 1
while staying loyal to the original mission of their founders.

THE WAGNER INSTITUTE

FOUNDER: William Wagner, an agent of the 19th century shipping magnate and banker Stephen Girard.

FOUNDED: In 1855 at 1700 W. Montgomery Ave. in North Philadelphia.

ORIGINAL MISSION: Free public education in natural science, which originally took the form of evening adult classes taught by Philadelphia-area scientists.

CHANGES OVER TIME: In the late 19th century, the Wagner added active research to its mission, with expeditions and specimen collection, according to Susan Glassman, the Wagner's director. Off-site educational programming for children and adults accounted for 10,000 of the Wagner's 25,000 attendees last year. "Anything with a long history has to change and evolve over time," Glassman said. "Our children's education program has really grown over the last twenty years. It's still all held with the concept of scientific education, but the way it's delivered and the balance between the parts has changed."

COLLECTION: The Wagner has more than 100,000 natural history specimens, including bird and mammal skins, fossils, shells, insects and minerals, as well as a library of more than 3,500 slides and an archive of scientific journals and papers, which date as far back as the 17th century. The site itself also attracts visitors interested in the development of 19th century science.

ON THE BARNES FOUNDATION: Regarding the Barnes, Glassman said: "William Wagner had a big idea for free public education, but he didn't specify how it had to happen. Barnes, on the other hand, had very specific ideas about how he wanted his vision carried out, which gives successive generations a lot less control, for better and for worse."

THE ROSENBACH MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

FOUNDERS: Philip H. Rosenbach and Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, who was known as "the Doctor." Philip was a dealer in fine and decorative arts. The Doctor specialized in rare books and manuscripts.

FOUNDED: In 1954 at 2008 DeLancey Place, the brothers' former home.

ORIGINAL MISSION: "The brothers intended to create something that was part museum and part educational facility," according to Director Derick Dreher.

CHANGES OVER TIME: The Rosenbach's changes, mission and audience have changed considerably since its founding, Dreher said. "During its early history, the museum was more of a private club. The Doctor had always welcomed scholars to look at his collection, but when it became a public museum—well, public isn't the right word. If you didn't know the secret knock, if you didn't know the museum existed, then you weren't likely to find out about it." The push to open the Rosenbach to a wider audience began in the mid-1980s, Dreher said, when the Rosenbach instituted open hours and expanded its staff of curators, docents and librarians. Dreher also praised the outreach work of his predecessor, Stephen Urice, who left the Rosenbach in 1998 for the Pew Charitable Trusts. "Stephen saw that if you weren't making a public case for why your collections are relevant, then you probably couldn't ask that community to support you either," Dreher said. He said the museum's educational programming and events like Bloomsday characterize an approach centered on showcasing the collections, bringing in visitors, and putting on exhibitions. "We like to think of ourselves as using our collections to touch or transform lives. In a sense, we've tried to refashion ourselves as a humanities center."

COLLECTION: Includes James Joyce's handwritten manuscript for *Ulysses*, the finest known first edition of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, a draft of the Declaration of Independence in Thomas Jefferson's hand, and more than one hundred of George Washington's personal letters. The museum has built on the brothers' original collection, acquiring the papers of poet Marianne Moore

and manuscripts and illustrations by children's author Maurice Sendak.

ON THE BARNES FOUNDATION: Regarding the Barnes, Dreher said: "The question the judge has to answer is whether the move will impinge on the founder's wishes. That's a complicated question. To the extent that the Barnes continues to meet their mission—meaning they hang the same works in the same way, they continue to view themselves as a school and accept students—if they can meet that mission, I don't think it matters where they are."

THE ATWATER KENT MUSEUM OF PHILADELPHIA

FOUNDER: A. Atwater Kent, who made his fortune manufacturing radios in the 1920s and 30s.

FOUNDED: In 1938, in a building at 15 S. 17th Street that once housed the Franklin Institute.

ORIGINAL MISSION: The Atwater Kent was founded to be the museum of Philadelphia's history. Kent also mandated that the museum be named after him and not charge an admission fee.

CHANGES OVER TIME: The museum's mission is the same today as it was at the time of its founding, according to Executive Director Vicki Sand, "telling the story of the history of the city." The museum has had to adjust to cuts in public funding, Sand said, which now make up only a third of its operating budget. In the 1990s, the museum began charging a five-dollar admission fee and combined its fundraising and governing boards into a single entity. "What's changed," Sand said, "is the recognition that museums have to have the opportunity to generate significant revenues."

COLLECTION: The museum has had a strong emphasis on industry, manufacturing and consumer goods. In 2002, the museum took over stewardship of 10,500 objects and 800 paintings from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, including a fork and knife that belonged to George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

THE MÜTTER MUSEUM

FOUNDER: Dr. Thomas Dent Mütter, physician.

FOUNDED: In 1858, Mütter signed an agreement with the College of Physicians to found a museum of pathological anatomy. The museum opened its doors in 1863. It is presently located at 19 S. 22nd St.

ORIGINAL MISSION: The museum was founded to educate medical students, and to collect materials of scientific medical interest.

CHANGES OVER TIME: As the Mütter has grown older, said Gretchen Worden, the museum's director, its visitors have become younger and from further outside the medical profession. The museum's annual attendance has more than doubled during the last two years. Advances in medicine have also changed ways individual objects are interpreted, Worden said: "Conditions which are not treatable in the past are now treatable, and that changes the way specimens get interpreted. This is human material. It's about them. It's about us. It's conditions you may or may not have heard about, but you'll see a specimen and realize this is something that can happen."

COLLECTION: More than 20,000 objects, including nearly 1,000 fluid-preserved human specimens, showing anatomy and the effects of disease on the body.

ON THE BARNES FOUNDATION: Regarding the Barnes, Worden said: "The wrought iron stuff is interesting, but to see the quantity of material from people like [Maurice] Prendergast and [Horace] Pippin that you see a bit of in art history textbooks, and then—by God! You see all that stuff, and it looks as fresh as the day it was made. It's a special experience, but there's no particular reason why it can't be duplicated. It would be great to get the museum into town where it would be more convenient to a lot of people.... Many institutions have been founded to provide inspirational education to further the working class, and I don't know if that's ever been the result. I don't know if students ever attended in the way [Barnes] had wanted. His intentions, by virtue of what he wanted, may have been impossible to carry out."

METRONAUT

Courts To Decide Future of Barnes

from BARNES page 1

institutional racism. That suit was quickly dismissed—but the counter-suits against the Barnes Foundation were not.

The foundation's trustees are still forbidden to raise the cost of admission, to lend paintings, or to sell paintings—even those that are not on display. "The Barnes Foundation is taught as an example of how not to run an arts institution because of the very precise prescriptions Barnes left," said Donald Kramer, an attorney at the Philadelphia law firm of Montgomery McCracken Walker and Rhoads LLP. Kramer publishes a newsletter called Non-Profit Issues. "The board can't sell a painting, can't move a painting, couldn't take a picture of a painting. A lot of things that clearly became out of style in the museum world," he said in an interview at his office in Center City. "We have to allow a safety valve to have changes."

Over the years, said Kramer, the Montgomery County Orphans' Court—which oversees all non-profits in the county—has written more than twenty opinions authorizing changes to Barnes's original terms of indenture. That includes a landmark decision in the 1960s that opened the foundation's doors to the public for the first time.

Fisher points to a particular clause in the Barnes Foundation's terms of indenture—one that says if it's no longer economically feasible to maintain an independent collection, the art could be subsumed into a larger, unspecified institution. Fisher says the proposed move will allow the Barnes Foundation to stay independent. "We're satisfied that the resources available to the Barnes are at a point where it's perilously close to making them insolvent," says Fisher. "We think this is far preferable."

THE DONOR'S WISHES

Not everyone agrees with Fisher's assessment. "The salvage operation is a classic case of destroying something to save it," writes *Los Angeles Times* art critic Christopher Knight. Like Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, writes Knight, the Barnes Foundation is emblematic of a particular moment in history. "The lovely house and its staggering collections are the singular embodiment of pragmatist philosophy—the defining American intellectual movement between the Civil War and the Cold War."

When his foundation opened in 1925, Barnes displayed his growing collection according to no aesthetic theory but his own. Barnes collected European, Pre-Columbian and African sculpture, along with European and American vernacular furniture. His collection of paintings included the Old Masters—Titian, Rembrandt, El Greco. But Barnes's specialties were French Post-Impressionism and early modernism. He owned some sixty paintings by Henri Matisse, forty-four by Pablo Picasso, sixty-nine by Paul Cezanne, and a frightening 180 by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. He also collected major pieces by Seurat, Rousseau, Soutine and Modigliani.

Barnes created "ensembles" of paintings from different centuries and continents. Paintings cover the walls of his twenty-two-room, Italianate gallery from corner to corner, and sometimes from floor to ceiling. The paintings are often interspersed with early American furniture and an array of wrought iron objects, which add to the complexity of Barnes's ensembles. Most pictures are identified only by painter; the frames rarely mention the year or title of the work.

If the Barnes experience has little to do with the white walls of the modern museum, it didn't look like other institutions of its day, either. Albert Barnes "wasn't in the game of following what the art community was doing. He was looking for different elements," Barnes CEO Kimberley Camp said in an interview at the Barnes Foundation in February.

Camp, an art historian by training, says Barnes was ahead of his time. "You have to remember that in the Twenties, there was no such thing as art education. There were no K-through-12 programs employing the arts as a way to enhance the ability of students to learn. There was no field trip to the museum or an orchestra. That was not the way that educators looked at how people learn."

Barnes had his own aesthetic theories—and he established the foundation, says Camp, to espouse them. "The classes here at the foundation were for art professionals. They were not for everyday people," she told me. "The classes here at the foundation have always had the rigor of graduate-level study. And have really focused on the issue of aesthetics, learning how to see, with a capital 'S.'"

Barnes invited only serious art students to take classes at his foundation, says Camp. But

he was very clear, she says, that those students could come from any racial or ethnic background. In the foundation's bylaws, Barnes instructed the trustees to "ensure that it is the plain people... men and women who gain their livelihood by daily toil in shops, factories, schools, stores and similar places, who shall have free access to the art gallery upon those days when the gallery is to be opened to the public" after his death.

"He believed that everyone was equal," Camp said. "And one of my favorite Barnes quotes, which always astounds me, he said that from the time that he was eight years old he was addicted to Negroes, and that was because his mother exposed him to Negro spirituals when he was eight years old and he loved the music. He collected Negro spiritual sheet music, records."

Barnes was born in Kensington, and grew up in South Philadelphia. He graduated from

Edward Rendell promised to find \$180 million in state and private funds for the school. A spokesman for Rendell said that the deal is not a quid pro quo because Lincoln has been "historically underfunded."

But for art critic Knight, the Lincoln deal is proof that the move has more to do with economics than art appreciation. "So far to date, the combined cost of moving the Barnes Foundation, and of getting Lincoln University on board approaches a quarter of a billion dollars," Knight said. "It will destroy the Barnes Foundation. But perhaps it will be an economic engine for redevelopment."

The Barnes move, says Knight, is an example of the so-called "Bilbao Effect," a reference to the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. "Cultural tourism is big business," said Knight. "It revived a fading industrial town Spain. And I think that's what is hoped for Philadelphia."



The Barnes Foundation's collection is valued at over \$20 billion.

Philadelphia Central High School and the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. "This was a man who grew up dirt poor in the slums of Philadelphia," said John Anderson, the author of *Art Held Hostage: The Battle Over the Barnes Foundation*. But instead of living the "horse-country life," as Anderson put it, "Barnes became a fervent New Dealer, a fervent pro-civil rights spokesman." None of that, Anderson said, endeared Barnes to the largely Republican art establishment in Philadelphia.

When it came to setting up his own foundation, said Anderson, Barnes was careful to specify that the collection should stay in Lower Merion. And that's exactly why he hired the best legal talent of his day, including the future U.S. Supreme Court justice Owen J. Roberts. "Dr. Albert Barnes saw the case example of his friend and lawyer John Johnson, a great Philadelphia lawyer and great Philadelphia art collector," said Anderson.

John G. Johnson left his collection to what was then the Pennsylvania Museum of Art. And he specified that the collection should be displayed in his home. After Johnson's death, the museum went to court and received permission to move the art to its galleries. When it came to his own collection, said Anderson, Albert Barnes took no chances. "He didn't want to see the Barnes collection loaded into the trucks and moved into the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the way the Johnson collection had been" in 1933.

THE BILBAO EFFECT: WOOLING THE CULTURAL TOURIST

When the trustees of the Barnes Foundation first proposed the move a year ago, its main opponents were art critics—and Lincoln University, a small, historically black college in Chester County.

Over the years, Albert Barnes entered into many associations with educational institutions, often severing those ties just as quickly when he deemed that his progressive educational philosophy wasn't taking root. At the time of his death, Barnes had formed an alliance with Lincoln University, the "black Princeton," and its President, Dr. Horace Mann Bond.

Barnes left Lincoln University the right to nominate four of his foundation's five trustees. It's a right the school now stands to lose. As a condition of their support, the charitable organizations backing the move say the Barnes Foundation's board must grow from five to fifteen—a change that would significantly reduce Lincoln's role at the Barnes.

At first, the school's trustees were outraged. But Lincoln dropped its objections in September, when Pennsylvania Governor

A new Barnes gallery on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway—not far from the Philadelphia Museum of Art—would give the city arguably the world's greatest collection of Post-Impressionist painting. Knight concedes that a new Barnes gallery could draw 300,000 to 350,000 visitors a year—many more than the 60,000 that are allowed by law to see the collection in Lower Merion each year. But he doubts that the essence of the Barnes Foundation would survive the move. "You can't just pick up the Barnes Foundation and move it to a tourist strip in downtown Philadelphia and expect the experience to be the same," said Knight. "Any more than you could move the Sistine ceiling from a cardinal's chapel in the Vatican. And expect that experience to be the same."

Philadelphia Mayor John Street has no such reservations about moving the Barnes Foundation to Center City. Street toured the foundation's galleries in January with Camp before speaking to reporters. A Barnes gallery on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Street explained, would raise "the profile of the city as a destination for people who are serious about their art to a whole new level." In particular, the mayor said, it would make Philadelphia more attractive to international tourism. "This is going to sound a little crass," he said. "We know that international visitors come. They stay longer. They spend more nights. They spend more money in restaurants."

RESCUE OR TAKEOVER?

The Barnes Foundation's administration says the move will also help carry out the foundation's educational mission. Camp said a new facility would allow the Barnes to do things it's never been able to before. "We would love to have an orientation area where we can talk to people about what the ensembles are, why this is different from any museum experience they have ever been in."

The foundation's trustees say a location on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway would allow the Barnes to open its doors wider than ever before. "With the moving of the Barnes to the Parkway," according to Watson, the foundation's chairman, "it will carry out the Barnes philosophy of education, making the art and his philosophy to a wide range of people. Particularly those who are from working families who have not been able to do that. In addition, to have the kind of endowment and the kind of programs which will make it possible for the Barnes to concentrate on what its mission should be, not survival."

The move will help the Barnes escape strict limits on visitation and other conduct placed on the foundation by its indenture—and by its

Lower Merion neighbors, said Rebecca Rimel, President and CEO of the Pew Charitable Trusts. "The facility cannot allow a large number of visitors," Rimel said last year. "They have a fabulous collection. And the donor's desire was for everyone to be able to visit it. And they are not able to honor the donor's intent."

Rimel says the funders have already raised \$100 million of the \$150 million needed to move the Barnes collection and restock its endowment. But author John Anderson wonders why Pew—along with the Annenberg Foundation, and the Lenfest Foundation—couldn't use some of that financial muscle to make the Barnes Foundation viable in its current location. "It's not a rescue. A rescue would cost a quarter of what they're talking about," Anderson said. "What we're talking about it is a very carefully studied, very carefully lawyered corporate takeover."

It's a charge that Rimel flatly denies. "A corporate takeover implies that there is one entity taking over another. That's completely not true. There is no acquire-or, or acquire-ee in this. The Barnes Foundation will be independent."

"That's extremely disingenuous," counters Anderson. He says the charitable organizations are all but purchasing the Barnes Foundation's art collection—at the bargain price of \$150 million. "The real question is who began the planning for this, and when did they begin it. And who's leading the corporate takeover?" Anderson suspects the plan has been in the works for three or four years. "What ultimately you come up with is an unholy alliance of the Philadelphia powerful. Foundations, corporations, politicians. Liberal and conservative, Republican and Democrat."

Rimel gives a very different account of where the idea to move the Barnes collection came from. "From day one, we have followed the lead of Dr. Watson and the Barnes Foundation," Rimel said. "The funders stood as they always have stood behind Dr. Watson and the Barnes board in whatever decision they needed to reach."

At the same time, the Pew Charitable Trusts is reorganizing to become a public charity, a change that will help the organization carry out its promise to help raise money for the proposed Barnes move. Starting in January, Pew will be able to provide charitable tax deductions to donors without having to route money through an outside charity—as was the case when Pew raised money for the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Rimel says the change has been in the works for three years—but points out the plan to move the Barnes collection has been under discussion for only two years.

If few have come forward to complain about the funders' aggressive role in the plan to move the Barnes, says Knight, it's because no one in the institutional art world can afford to risk their wrath. "They are terrified to speak up about this, because nobody wants to alienate big philanthropies like Pew and Annenberg. Not in times like these when money is so tight, and so many institutions need their help."

STUDENTS GO TO COURT

When the petition to move goes before a Montgomery County Orphans' Court in December, its only formal opponent will be a group of three students at the Barnes Foundation. They say Barnes wanted to establish a school, not a museum—and that the proposed move would undermine that mission.

One of those students, 86-year-old William Phillips of West Philadelphia, first took classes at the Barnes Foundation in 1941. Phillips recalls that Barnes would sometimes mingle with the students before class. "He would come down to the main gallery, sit in an arm chair, smoke a cigarette, and generally carry on in an informal way until class time." Phillips was a 20-year-old student at Philadelphia Central Evening High School when a teacher first introduced him to art. A few years later, Phillips was one of several black students invited to attend classes in art appreciation at the Barnes. Phillips thinks the idea of the Barnes Foundation as a tourist attraction in Philadelphia would have made its founder furious. "This is absolutely insane," said Phillips. "I think it would be along the lines of criminal. Some high form of criminality."

Phillips and two other current students asked the judge for full standing to oppose the move in court. Judge Stanley Ott denied the request, but agreed to admit the students as friends of the court—though they must focus on how the move would affect the foundation's status as an educational institution.

The first hearing in the case is scheduled for December 8th. A ruling is expected sometime next year.

Joel Rose covers arts and culture for WHY? public radio in Philadelphia.



Beating Ploughshares Into Swords

The war on terror might be winnable, if only ideas could be vanquished as easily as armies.

WHY AMERICA SLEPT

By Gerald Posner
New York: Random House
2003

AL-QAEDA

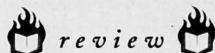
AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE MODERN

By John Gray
New York: The New Press
2003

AL-QAEDA:

CASTING A SHADOW OF TERROR

By Jason Burke
London: I.B. Tauris
2003



BY JUSTIN VOGT

Two days after the horrific terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the President made an important speech in which he addressed the fears of a worried nation. He had been in office for less than a year, and the public and the media were anxious to see how he would handle this crisis.

"We've been very blessed in this country to have been free of the kind of terrorist activity that has gripped other countries," he told an enthusiastic, upbeat crowd. "But I think it's important that we not overreact to it."

This advice was "quite right," seconded the *Washington Post*. The nation's pundits concurred, and so did most Americans. National attention soon focused elsewhere.

If this scene doesn't match your memories of those troubling days, it is because the President I am describing is Bill Clinton, not George W. Bush, and the attack in question took place on February 27, 1993. Clinton traveled to New Jersey two days after the 1993 attack, in which six people died and hundreds were injured, to deliver a speech introducing a new program that would allow college students to pay off tuition debts by doing community service. Clinton's appeal to his fellow citizens not to "overreact" to the bombing of the World Trade Center was merely an afterthought.

On the evening of September 11, 2001, President Bush suggested that Americans should react to that day's events very strongly indeed. For it was "our way of life, our very freedom" that had come under attack, Bush declared. "None of us will ever forget this day," Bush said, and soon, conventional wisdom agreed: September 11 had "changed everything." 9/11—and especially the American reaction to it—has dominated the world stage for two years, and will surely continue to do so.

Despite the vast differences in their outcomes, the 1993 and 2001 plots were remarkably similar in their basic planning and execution. The plots themselves had the same target and the same desired result, differing only in that 1993 attack involved a conventional weapon detonated by a timer, while the 2001 attacks were defined by the sinister transformation of a technology as familiar as the commercial airliner into a weapon of suicidal terrorism. Yet ultimately, the outcomes of both plots hinged a great deal on chance.

Far from being a small-time provocation, the 1993 WTC bombing was in fact a massive strike that happened to fail. Consider a much-repeated anecdote involving the plot's mastermind, Ramzi Yousef. After being captured in Pakistan in 1995, Yousef was flown back to

New York to stand trial. As the plane carrying him approached lower Manhattan, an FBI agent pointed to the Twin Towers and taunted Yousef: "They're still standing."

"They wouldn't be if I'd gotten a little more money," Yousef replied.

Yousef's bomb, planted in a truck in the parking lot underneath Tower One, was

expected. Had the bomb been only slightly stronger and positioned differently, there is a chance that the result could have been a massacre far worse than the one witnessed on 9/11.

In the two years since 9/11, the attacks on that day have come to be seen as the perfect crime. Yet even putting aside the many opportunities for the 2001 plan to fall apart well

rare federal flight marshal—could have presented a last-minute obstacle to the hijackers' plot, with a consequent reduction or even elimination of the loss of life that ensued.

The 2001 attacks were quickly determined to be the work of "al-Qaeda," which, after the bombings of American embassies in East Africa in 1998 and of the USS Cole in 2001, had become the most visible symbol of the growing threat to US interests and citizens from radical Islamist terrorism. In contrast, the group that perpetrated the 1993 attacks was—and to this day remains—less easy to identify and categorize. Theories which link Yousef to Osama bin Laden are extraordinarily weak (as is the theory that Yousef was working on behalf of Saddam Hussein).

However, in both cases, the plotters were

webs to put their plans into motion, all the while easily avoiding detection by less-than-vigilant law enforcement agencies and enjoying the anonymity offered by the strange combination of naiveté, trust, lack of curiosity, and indifference to others that characterizes many contemporary American communities.

Thus, the main difference between the two groups is not that the 1993 group was an "al-Qaeda" cell and the 1993 group was not. It is simply that the 2001 group unfortunately had better luck. But the central myth that frames the "war on terror" declared after 9/11 fails to take this into account. That myth, put forward by the Bush Administration and left largely unchanged by the American media, is that spectacular acts of terrorism like those witnessed on 9/11 require the backing of a well-organized, well-financed, centrally-controlled entity like "al-Qaeda," an enemy which can be fought in a war. There is a national consensus that by targeting "al-Qaeda," its leaders, and its possible or potential state sponsors, the US and its allies are verifiably diminishing the threat of terrorism in an effort that will result, at some future point, in the eradication of "terror."

A number of recent books help demonstrate the danger of this fallacy. In *Why America Slept*, Gerald Posner delves into the complex relationship between the growth of Islamic militancy and the spread of American global dominance witnessed in the post-Cold War 1990s. Posner, an investigative historian, is best known for two controversial books: *Case Closed*, which set out to debunk the popular conspiracy theories that cling to the assassinations of JFK and to argue that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone; and *Killing the Dream*, which made a similar argument about James Earl Ray's sole culpability for the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Thus, his approach to 9/11—as a criminal conspiracy that could have been prevented and which we still fail to fully understand—is not a surprise.

The book paints a sobering portrait of a sole superpower whose government, intelligence services, and indeed entire political culture were unable to grasp America's vulnerability and the seriousness of the threat posed to domestic security by Islamist terrorism. Posner's narrative is shaped by the exasperating litany of misalliances, turf wars, missed oppor-



intended to cause severe structural damage, causing Tower One to topple into Tower Two well before tens of thousands of the workers in both towers could be evacuated. That was the outcome Yousef and his co-conspirators desired, planned for, and to some degree

before 9/11, scores of things could have happened, even once the terrorists were already on the planes, to prevent them from being used as missiles. A simple series of unexpected, but rather common contingencies—flight delays, air sickness, bad turbulence, the presence of a

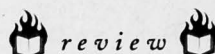
relatively small groups of radical Islamists of Middle Eastern origin, trained in the jihadi camps operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1990s, who exploited weaknesses in INS security practices to gain entry into the U.S. Once here, both groups used complex financial

100 Distinct Toilet Brushes

Trivial Questions Get Shiny New Answers from Commercial Design

THE SUBSTANCE OF STYLE: HOW THE RISE OF AESTHETIC VALUE IS REMAKING COMMERCE, CULTURE, AND CONSCIOUSNESS

By Virginia Postrel
New York: HarperCollins Publishers
2003



BY JOSHUA GLEASON

A society, as it becomes less and less able...to justify the inevitability of its particular forms breaks up the accepted notions upon which artist and writers must depend in large part for their communication...it becomes difficult to say anything. All the verities involved by religion, authority, tradition, style, are thrown into question... such a state of affairs has usually resolved itself to a motionless Alexandrianism, an academicism in which the really important issues are left untouched because they involve controversy, and in which creative activity to virtuosity in the small details of form...these same themes are mechanically varied in a hundred different works, and yet nothing new is produced.

—Clement Greenberg

At the close of his 1986 book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, media critic Neil Postman writes, "There are two ways by which the spirit of a culture may be shriveled. In the first—the Orwellian—culture becomes a prison. In the second—the Huxleyan—culture becomes a burlesque.... In the Huxleyan prophecy, Big Brother does not watch us, by his choice. We watch him, by ours." There is no longer a question which shriveling will afflict our culture; Huxley, not Orwell, was right. If there was a time when it seemed the Huxleyan world could be averted, or at least muzzled, that time has surely passed. But if the struggle over the determination of culture is, to some extent, over, the problem of subjectivity (or the determination of identity)

looms larger than ever. This is due, in large part, to the florid expansion of the marketplace for design. For, as anyone paying attention knows, design is no longer merely a system of production applied to surfaces and objects. Design is increasingly becoming a technology of identity production, "whether the product in question is...your sagging face (designer surgery), or your lagging personality (designer drugs), your historical memory (designer museums), or your DNA future (designer children)." But should the expansion of design, and the visual pleasure it seeks to produce, be opposed? Is the commodification of identity a dangerous development, destined to erode what little "room" remains for the self-determination of identity? Is the Huxleyan world really that bad after all? According to *New York Times* economics columnist Virginia Postrel, the answer is no.

In *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value Is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness*, Postrel celebrates what she calls "the rise of look and feel." She insists that "today's aesthetic imperative represents...the increased claims of pleasure and self-expression. Beauty...no longer needs justification beyond the pleasure and meaning it provides." To prove this point she catalogs the recent explosion of heavily designed products, environments, and identities: translucent "flavored" iMacs, Starbucks interiors, jewel-toned cell phones, hair dyes, colored contacts, tummy tucks, botox injections, &c. Doing her best to strike a populist pose, Postrel lashes out at the pantheon of cultural critics who have belittled the pleasure we get from such "commodities," criticism that has condemned such pleasures on the grounds that they are little more than cheap capitalist manipulation: the fruits of a marketing swindle par excellence. "For far too long," Postrel intones, "the elite modernist monarchy has denied the common man his passing joys, now the common man is taking them back." To be sure, design is increasingly colonizing the world of utilitarian goods. It has no fear. It knows no limits. In many ways it is the perfect grease for the wheels of capital. For, if the potential utility of a product can be exhausted, surely its design cannot. In this

light, the apotheosis of design-as-product appears not only as the signature of our age, but as a historical inevitability. If Guy Debord defined spectacle as "capital accumulated to the point where it becomes an image," art critic Hal Foster, in *Design and Crime*, a collection of essays on art and culture, now argues that the reverse is also true: "spectacle is an image accumulated to the point where it becomes capital." Regardless, Postrel certainly has a point, "the aesthetic imperative" has come home to roost;

watch a cheerleader in action (remember: she's an economist). For Postrel the commodification of aesthetics represents a thorough democratization of visual pleasure. She swoons over the number of toilet brushes, and other such inane utilitarian products, currently on the market. In her words, "The lowliest household tool has become an object of culture, texture, personality, whimsy, even elegance. Dozen, probably hundreds, of distinctly designed toilet-brush sets are available—functional, flamboyant, modern, mahogany." With such statements, one almost has to wonder whether Postrel is secretly on the take from some sort of advertising agency. But her crucial point is that the ancient dichotomy between surface and substance no longer holds, and that those who would claim that design is merely some sort of surface deception that masks a hollow, or non-existent, interior, are wrong. Surface, in Postrel's estimation, is substance,

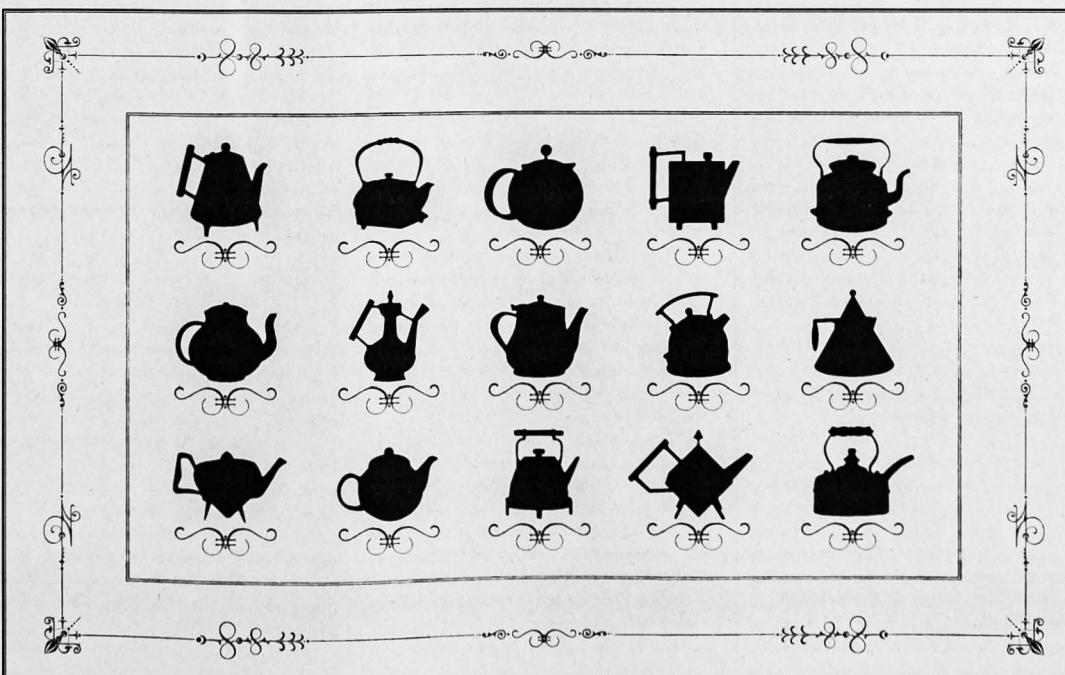
say the least. But in defending herself against this Frankfurt School-style of criticism Postrel misses the larger point. What is disconcerting is not each instance of what consumerist pleasure per se, but its colonization of the entire cultural landscape. Caught up in her defense of each beautiful product and the pleasure it contains, Postrel has lost sight of design-as-product's saturation of our entire culture. Each moment of spectacle seems harmless; but what if all our experience becomes "spectacular"? Think of seeing Las Vegas or Disney World for the first time. These places offer rich visual experiences that can be pleasurable, even awe-inspiring. But do you want to live in a world that has been entirely made over in the image of Las Vegas? Distinctions between the utilitarian and the designed are important, even necessary. The culture of design—and its emergence as the dominant cultural force of our time—directly

the face of the myriad hollow, momentary experiences propagated by the culture of design? In what is probably the most chilling chapter of Postrel's book, a chapter she calls Meaningful Looks, Postrel continues to insist that surface is substance, not only for products, but for bodies as well.

"I like that. I'm like that." This is Postrel's mantra of self-determination for the age of design. Which means, in effect, we are what we buy. Postrel writes, "tinkering with the look and feel of our persons, places, and things—and with the identities they express...affirms our ideals, expresses our connections with others, gives us the pleasures of problem solving and discovery." Now, I don't deny that personal style (let's call it artificial plumage) has social importance. More often than not appearance is the means by which we communicate basic, but nonetheless important, messages about ourselves to those around us (tastes, group affiliations, and so on). But Postrel is clearly saying more than this. In considering the case of a young woman who underwent plastic surgery to "repair" her distorted features Postrel concludes, "She could have lived the rest of her life with her old face. But, in some important way, it wouldn't have been the real her. Her inner identity did not match her outer self. High-tech and artificial, aesthetic surgery let her claim her authentic face." Such narratives, and Postrel dishes up a number of them, bear a striking resemblance to those dramatized on popular daytime television programs. The implication of both is that the way you feel inside can be manipulated by adjusting your outside. While this may be true in a very limited capacity, it is not true in any meaningful way. "I like that. I'm like that." Whatever the case may be, identity seems less and less the product of contemplation, lived experience, and more the product of an accumulation of surfaces. As Hal Foster writes, "design is all about desire, but strangely this desire seems almost subject-less today, or at least lack-less; that is, design seems to advance a new kind of narcissism, one that is all image and no interiority."

Through the culture of design we have learned the hard way that distinctions between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic are important, even vital. For meaning, with a capital "M," does not emanate from surface, as Postrel suggests. Meaning is produced contextually. Context is crucial. The great danger of Postrel's "aesthetic imperative" is that it will bring about the dissolution of the very vicissitude that gives cultural forms their resonance, and helps give our lives their meaning.

Joshua Gleason lives in Brooklyn, New York.



and if we can get a sparkly phone (instead of a matte black one), then by god, we will get a sparkly phone.

Postrel's text is valuable insofar as it identifies and articulates the dimensions of a new cultural trend, the rise of design-as-product. But her effort doesn't end there. In fact, that's where it begins. To read Postrel's book is to

plain and simple. Unlike some of the arch-modernist humbugs that Postrel excavates—in order to caricature them as puritanical classicists—I don't disagree with her on this point. Surface and substance are not readily disectable, and arguing that design-as-product succeeds only via some sort of marketing manipulation is ferociously condescending, to

threatens these kinds of distinctions. If design can be understood as a fundamentally capitalist mode of address (as in: "Hey, consume me!") design's ultimate triumph heralds the foreclosure of any remaining spaces of indeterminacy. What kind of subjectivity becomes possible under these conditions? Can interior space or private experience maintain its autonomy in



tunities, poor decision making, and lack of foresight that characterized the efforts of the Clinton Administration, the CIA, and the FBI to neutralize terrorist activity in the 1990s. Equally piercing is Posner's re-construction of the months leading up to 9/11, when a now familiar but still mind-boggling breakdown of communications between and within the intelligence services and the INS led to the failure to directly prevent the attacks by apprehending the plotters.

Posner's book demonstrates in detail the almost inevitable nature of 9/11. Throughout the 1990s, a multi-faceted and diverse group of militant Islamists, none of whom can be accurately described as linked to "al-Qaeda," had devised sophisticated plots to attack Americans inside the United States and had come very close to succeeding. In addition to the 1993 WTC bombing, there were attacks on bridges, tunnels and monuments in the New York area planned by followers of the blind Egyptian cleric Omar Abdel Rahman, and the barely-averted suicide bombing planned by a young Palestinian immigrant in 1997, which would have struck the Atlantic Avenue subway and train station in Brooklyn. Finally, in 1999, a group that did have ties to bin Laden was unable to pull off the "Millennium Plot" to bomb the Los Angeles airport after Ahmed Ressam, an Algerian immigrant to Canada, was apprehended trying to cross the border into America with the materials for the bomb in the trunk of his rental car. A customs official had noticed that Ressam's hands were shaking and that he was sweating even though it was quite cold that day. Once again, the element of chance played a determining factor in the outcome of a sophisticated terrorist plot. Even "al-Qaeda" was not immune from the vagaries of chance.

Yet for all the vigor with which Posner excavates the stories of these attempts and illuminates their relationship to 9/11, his book does not convincingly explain "why America slept." In his introduction, Posner suggests that the prosperity of the 1990s and the bubble of tele-frivolity that passed for cultural and political discourse in that decade are to blame, noting that "while many of America's best reporters chased hanging chads and butterfly ballots in Florida after the 2000 presidential election, Mohammad Atta and Marwan Al-

Shehhi were also in the state, learning to fly the planes they would turn into giant bombs."

Can the shallowness of a society immersed in a celebrity-crazed, narcissistic popular culture really account for the fact that, despite many "possible 9/11s," Americans were generally oblivious to the threat of Islamist terror? Perhaps this is one factor, but Americans' lack of concern likely derives more from a widespread misunderstanding of the nature of Islamic terror and that of its presumptive enemy, Western-led "globalization." I'm referring to the pervasive perception of these terrorists as driven by a traditionalism that involves a rejection of everything modern; who, when not infiltrating America's borders, live in a backward, non-Western, very anti-modern world into which they aim to plunge the rest of us.

In *Al Qaeda and What It Means to Be Modern*, the British political philosopher John Gray demolishes that misconception. Gray, who is famous for his transition from vocal defender to fierce critic of free market orthodoxy, argues that contemporary Islamist terrorism is a very modern project and must be understood as such if it is to be countered. "Like communism and Nazism," Gray writes, "radical Islam is modern."

Though it claims to be antiwestern, it is shaped as much by western ideology as by Islamic traditions. Like Marxists and neo-liberals, radical Islamists see history as a prelude to a new world. All are convinced they can remake the human condition. If there is a uniquely modern myth, this is it.

Gray sees radical Islamists, in their belief that they can remake the world through spectacular acts of terrorism, as the mirror image of post-Cold War neoliberals, who believe that "only American-style 'democratic capitalism' is truly modern, and that it is destined to spread everywhere," spawning a universal civilization and heralding the fabled "end of history."

It is this "fantastical creed," Gray writes, that "animates the 'war on terror,' in which Al Qaeda is viewed as a relic of the past." A nearly delusional faith in endless growth at home and rapid acquiescence to American-dominated global capitalism abroad was the bedrock on which Americans' collective sense of invulner-

ability and security rested in the 1990s. Several "possible 9/11s" did nothing to shake that faith: surely, the system that outlasted Soviet Communism, fostered rapid scientific and technological innovation, and created unparalleled prosperity could not possibly be threatened by a ragtag group of religious fanatics living in caves on the other side of the world.

After 9/11, that image of Islamist terrorism was superseded by a different popular conception, one actively encouraged by the rhetoric of politicians and pundits all over the world. Suddenly, in vaguely Orwellian fashion, all Islamist terrorists have become "al-Qaeda terrorists," or "linked to al-Qaeda." In the American imagination, the terrorists—formerly a disorganized gaggle of cave-dwelling thugs—became a slick multinational operation headed by a powerful super-villain, like something out of a James Bond film.

Yet, as Jason Burke writes in his absorbing and informative book *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror*,

The idea that al-Qaeda is a coherent, hierarchical terrorist group, with a single leader, a broadly uniform ideology and an ability to conceive and execute projects globally through well-disciplined cadres, sleeper cells and activists spread around the world is misplaced.

Burke is a reporter for the *London Observer* who has been covering the Middle East and Southwest Asia for ten years, living in and reporting from Afghanistan and Pakistan as the Taliban came to power and allied themselves with bin Laden and his followers. Burke offers a portrait of a three-tiered al-Qaeda: the "hardcore" (Osama bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Mohammed Atef, Abu Zubaydah, and a few others) who partner with "associate members" (men like Hambali in Southeast Asia and Abu Doha in London), who in turn act as go-betweens, linking bin Laden's small coterie with what Burke terms the "vast, amorphous movement of modern radical Islam, with its myriad cells, domestic groups, 'groupuscules' and splinters."

According to Burke, the dominant take on "al-Qaeda" fails to grasp that historically, "it was more often al-Qaeda that was approached

with ideas or plans for an attack than groups or individuals approached by al-Qaeda." What this suggests is that the neutralization of "hardcore al-Qaeda" following the war in Afghanistan may have cut off a valuable resource for militant Islamists, but didn't necessarily have any impact on the local associates and groups, who were more often than not the originators of "al-Qaeda" plots and the source of personnel. "The camps in Afghanistan may be gone but the reason the volunteers traveled there persist," Burke writes. "Do we honestly think that, because Afghanistan is no longer a viable destination, they will not seek other places or other ways to learn the skills necessary to fight their own personal jihad?"

Burke's portrait of post-9/11, post-Afghanistan "al-Qaeda" suggests that the global jihadi movement may be weakened in the short term but not at all mortally wounded. He notes that groups in Chechnya, Kashmir, and the Palestinian occupied territories, which never before identified with global jihad, now see their struggles as linked to bin Laden's. This "mainstreaming" of the concept of global jihad is an important victory for bin Laden. Burke writes: "Overcoming the fitna, or factionalism and parochialism, of militant groups, was one of the main reasons bin Laden set up 'al-Qaeda.' He is finally achieving that aim."

What is most disturbing about this account of "al-Qaeda" is Burke's prognosis for the future direction of the global Islamist jihad movement. "In the post 9/11 environment, the message of bin Laden makes sense for millions," he writes, and it is from these millions that the new wave of terrorists will emerge.

The Bush Administration has in fact made an effort to counter the growing appeal of bin Laden's message, to win the struggle for hearts and minds in the Muslim world and to stem the flood of potential new terrorists. But this effort has been so intellectually bankrupt, so hopelessly misguided and so completely ineffective that it would be laughable if the stakes were not so high. From the widely-derided and short-lived campaign to "re-brand" America, conceived by advertising industry legend Charlotte Beers, to *Hi*, the equally ill-conceived lifestyle magazine targeting young Middle Eastern Muslims, the State Department's efforts at "public diplomacy"

since 9/11 have shown an almost willful refusal to address, or even acknowledge, the very substantive political issues that matter to their target audiences. Given the stunning weakness of these efforts, it is no surprise that global opinion polls continue to show a precipitous growth in anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world. It is that sentiment from which radical Islamists draw their strength and which gives them credibility in the eyes of millions of young Muslims, from whose ranks Burke believes will emerge the next generation of terrorists, who will bear almost no resemblance to the myth of a centrally-organized cabal known as "al-Qaeda." He writes:

They will be 'freelance' operators who have no obvious connection to any existing group. They will have no previous involvement in terrorism. They may not have access to sophisticated explosives, automatic weapons or rockets, but once they have accepted bin Laden's worldview they will be committed to find the resources necessary to launch their own violent jihad.

The reality of a struggle to contain a globalized, decentralized and largely anonymous jihad movement, one that will attack whenever and wherever possible with whatever means available, differs enormously from the much simpler picture of a "war" against "al-Qaeda" offered by the Bush Administration and bolstered in the public mind by themedia. This misconception replaces one dangerous complacency with another: the naive and overconfidence of the 1990s is being supplanted by a new, Orwellian complacency, in which the American public sees itself locked in a never-ending struggle against a static enemy known as "al-Qaeda."

Sadly, this process has already begun. It is the practice of the Bush Administration to encourage the public to conceive of all threats to American global dominance as emanating from the same source. There was never any attempt to relieve the public of its conviction that Saddam Hussein was involved in 9/11, a belief still held by an incredible 69 percent of Americans two years after the attacks. After the alleged routing of "al-Qaeda" in Afghanistan, Iraq quickly became the next battleground in

the "war on terror," with the Administration pointing to extremely flimsy evidence to claim a connection between "al-Qaeda" and Hussein. And since the defeat of Hussein and the prematurely celebrated "end of major combat," the surprisingly intense and prolonged resistance to the American occupation has repeatedly been blamed on "al-Qaeda."

While it's certainly the case that foreign fighters have joined the fray in Iraq, and that the resistance has increasingly turned to the tactics of terrorism, the fact is that the Pentagon isn't altogether sure just who it is fighting in Iraq these days. Iraq is only now becoming the sum of all fears about the Middle East, which it never quite was before the war. It is a confusing, chaotic and asymmetrical battleground, a place where Islamist terrorists seem to be regrouping in unpredictable ways, forming unexpected alliances and once again transforming their means of operation to fit the situation at hand. Nevertheless, all of this complication must not be allowed to confuse the public. The Orwellian message remains: "We're at war with al-Qaeda. We've always been at war with al-Qaeda."

But we will not always be at war with "al-Qaeda." Within the next five or ten years, it is likely that Osama bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, and the few remaining "hardcore al-Qaeda" members still at large will be captured or killed. Americans need to understand that, by that point, their removal will likely have little impact on Islamist terrorism, and that the current battle against "al-Qaeda" will not result in a definitive victory against the violent global jihad movement. Even when bin Laden is gone, it will still be unnervingly easy for terrorists of any kind to strike at soft targets all over the world. And it's already clear that retributive, reactive wars against failed states (Afghanistan) and preventive wars against failing states (Iraq) do little to diminish that threat: indeed, in some cases they may actually worsen it. The disturbing truth is that the best strategies to achieve what we can only hope will be the not-too-distant demise of Islamist terrorism are no better known to us today than they were on September 10th, 2001.

Justin Vogt is an associate producer at Ark Media, whose documentaries air on the PBS television series "Frontline."

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EASTERN CONFERENCE

BY NATHANIEL FRIEDMAN

1) PHILADELPHIA 76'ERS-

During the Larry Brown-era, the Sixers established themselves as perennial contenders despite the total absence of anything resembling a talent pool or game plan. With the addition of Glen Robinson and Marc Jackson, they get a second big-time scorer and a blue-collar center to complement Kenny Thomas' overachievement in the post; filling out the roster and giving A.I. the chance to pace himself makes them a lock to go deep into the play-offs.

2) INDIANA PACERS-

In Jermaine O'Neal, the Pacers already have the best big man in the East. The addition of its best coach (Rick Carlisle, whose dismissal from Detroit will go down as one of the worst moves in recent history) and the most intriguing GM around (Larry Bird, as sharp in the front office as he was on the court) gives them a solid foundation that indecisive Isiah Thomas could never provide. All of this bodes well for keeping Ron Artest sane and bringing along Al Harrington, who by the end of the year will be one of the game's most potent scorers.

3) BOSTON CELTICS-

Antoine Walker was doing nothing in Beantown but holding back Paul Pierce, a rhythm player who, like Iverson, needs the ball to get hot. Pierce will lead the league in scoring and step up his assists and rebounds to compensate for the loss of Toine. What keeps the Celts from being last year's Sixers is a frontline of Raef LaFrentz and a reborn Vin Baker. The tandem of a versatile, seven-footer and an All-Star caliber four make them a serious threat in the height-starved East.

4) CHICAGO BULLS-

After five years of rebuilding, the Bulls are ready to rejoin the East's elite. Eddy Curry and Tyson Chandler are monsters down low, and still developing; Curry can score at will and is close to figuring out how to rebound, and Chandler just needs a steady offensive game to go with his gobs of boards and blocks. On their off-nights, the electrifying Jamal Crawford can win the game himself, with vets Scottie Pippen and Jalen Rose providing the glue to hold this youth movement together.

5) NEW JERSEY NETS-

They may have gone to the Finals each of the last two years, but the Nets' hold on the Eastern Conference has been anything but firm. The Nets lost its coaching mastermind to a conference rival when assistant Eddie Jordan joined the Wizards, brought in Alonzo Mourning, a fractious, bullying vet of questionable health, and raised players' eyebrows by refusing to resign Kenyon Martin, their only proven young star.

6) DETROIT PISTONS-

Very soon, the people of Detroit will learn the headache that is Larry Brown. The Pistons' surprising success over the last two seasons is a testament to Rick Carlisle's coaching prowess; the Sixers, on the other hand, owe it all to Iverson's heroism. The key to this team is Chauncey Billups' explosive scoring, and Billups—a shoot-first, three-point happy-go with a chip on his shoulder—will be on Brown's bench before the All-Star break. With him neutralized, they'll be a one-dimensional team relying on Ben Wallace's defense—a formula that works only in football.

7) ORLANDO MAGIC-

Giving Tracy McGrady a supporting cast worth mentioning by name seems like the logical next step, but second-

NBA PRESEASON PROPHECIES

WHAT WILL THE PRO BASKETBALL SEASON BRING? ASK THE ENTRAILS.

BY NATHANIEL FRIEDMAN
East Coast Correspondent (Philadelphia)CONFERENCE FINALS
East: Pacers over Sixers
West: Rockets over SpursFINALS:
Rockets over Sixers in Five GamesBY TODD ITO
West Coast Correspondent (Memphis)CONFERENCE FINALS
East: Pacers over Hornets
West: Timberwolves over SunsFINALS:
Pacers over Timberwolves in Six Games.

year forward Drew Gooden and veteran addition Juwan Howard will want the ball more than you think, leading them to neglect their appointee in the paint. They'll also cramp the style of the rangy, improvisatory T-Mac, who thrives on having the entire court at his disposal.

8) WASHINGTON WIZARDS-

Free from the yoke of his Airness' spoiled, cutthroat attitude, the Wiz can now realize that they're developing quite a bit of young talent. The supremely lithe and athletic Kwame Brown, the whipping boy for Jordan's D.C. woes, will rediscover the brilliance he showed at the beginning of last year, and the dynamic Gilbert Arenas is on the verge of revolutionizing the point guard position. The Wizards will barely sneak into the playoffs, but they've got their eyes on the future.

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER -

GARY PAYTON-Los Angeles
It may be the Diesel's team, but Payton will be the one to lead the Lakers back to the promised land. The only way for this team to keep its many strong egos in check is for an

elite point like the Glove to direct traffic with a sense of single-minded purpose, something he's proven capable of when he's given talent to work with. Payton wants a ring bad, and he'll pimp the Lakers to get there.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR -

ZARKO CARBARKAPA-Phoenix Suns
In a repeat of last year's race, it'll come down to Melo and Carbarcaba—a battle between a heavily hyped media sensation and a dark horse that slipped through the cracks to the Suns. Carbarcaba, taken 17th overall, is the perfect big man for this young, athletic squad; he'll play all over the floor and average a hyper-efficient 16 and 8 a game.

MOST IMPROVED PLAYER -

QYNTELWOODS-Portland Trailblazers
He's been a man among boys in summer league play since being drafted in 2002, but the Blazers have been reluctant to let this raw juno sensation get burn in the regular season. But with the fans weary and management looking to clear house, the time is perfect for Woods to join his pal Zach Randolph in the starting line-up. Randolph may make the All-Star team, but it will be Woods' emergence as the next T-Mac that will have people talking about Portland again.

COACH OF THE YEAR

BILL CARTWRIGHT—Chicago Bulls
A winner as a player with the Bulls,

the soft-spoken seven footer will now begin to leave his mark as a coach. Pulling together the so-called "Baby Bulls" for a credible play-off run will cement his reputation as a superior mentor to—and friend of—the modern NBA player.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

BY TODD ITO

1) PHOENIX SUNS

The Suns are without question the best young team in the League. They are so young and athletic that they will simply overpower most of their opponents. The nucleus of Starbury, Amare, and the Matrix will be the asteroid that ends the existence of all the dinosaurs in the Western Conference—like the Kings and the Lakers.

2) SAN ANTONIO SPURS

The reigning champs still have the best player in the League in Tim Duncan, but the Spurs made too many moves in the offseason to maintain the chemistry that helped them to the Finals last year. They will miss the veteran leadership of the Admiral, but the biggest problem will be replacing the heart and ener-

gy of the departed Stephen Jackson.
3) MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES

Of all the offseason moves in the West, the addition who will most help his new team is Sam Cassell. As his clutch performances in Houston and Milwaukee proved, Cassell truly has the heart of a champion. He should be a calming influence on the excessively emotional Latrell Sprewell and Kevin Garnett. Add in the shooting of Wally Szczerbiak, and you've got a real juggernaut up in the North Star State.

4) HOUSTON ROCKETS

After one year adjusting to the level of play in the NBA, Yao Ming is ready to dominate. With new coach Jeff Van Gundy insisting on dumping the ball down low, the Rockets will finally learn to play proper basketball, not that streetball that Steve Francis and Cuttino Mobley prefer. 2004 will be the first year of the new Ming Dynasty.

5) DALLAS MAVERICKS

The Mavs will prove the old axiom that too many cooks spoil the broth. Mark Cuban has assembled an unprecedented quartet of talented forwards, but the team still lacks a tough interior presence and a second ballhandler. Despite the new additions, expect Dallas to actually take a step back this year.

6) LOS ANGELES LAKERS

With four Hall of Famers on the roster, the purple and gold are hard to discount. Still, it's hard to believe that Payton and Malone, who are both well past their prime, will maintain their focus and finally get their rings with the media circus that will be surrounding the Lakers all season.

7) SACRAMENTO KINGS

The window for the Kings to win a championship seems to be closing. Divac and Webber are no longer spring chickens, and neither is the

henpecked Doug Christie. Furthermore, last year proved that Bibby's 2002 playoff performance was merely a fluke. These kings will likely never get a chance to sit on the throne.

8) MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES

If Jerry West hasn't proved his genius by now, he will this season. Laugh if you will, but the Grizzlies field a team that is oddly similar to the defending champion Spurs. There's a superstar forward (Pau Gasol), a young point guard (Jason Williams), and a deep group of interchangeable parts including swingman Mike Miller, sweet shooting Wesley Person, and the explosive big man Stromile Swift.

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

BEN WALLACE - Detroit Pistons
For the past few seasons, he has been an intimidating presence on the defensive end. This year, under new coach Larry Brown, Big Ben adds a consistent jumpshot and becomes the most dominant player in the League.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

JARVIS HAYES - Washington Wizards
This Glenn Rice clone will log major minutes early in the season with Jerry Stackhouse out with an injury. His outside scoring will open things up inside for the Wizards' young frontcourt of Brendan Haywood and Kwame Brown.

MOST IMPROVED PLAYER

LAMAR ODOM - Miami Heat
Odom is a young man who has long been in need of some discipline and guidance. He should blossom in the structured offense Pat Riley leaves down in Miami and finally fulfill the potential he has shown throughout his career.

COACH OF THE YEAR

TIM FLOYD - New Orleans Hornets
After a disastrous experience in Chicago, Floyd will show his doubts that he can do with a team of skilled veterans.

1ST
QUARTER

PLAY BY PLAY

INANIMATE OBJECTS WIN COIN TOSS
KICK-OFF: Elam kicks to PLASTIC BAG FROM OTHER COUNTRY, who glides five yards before being ripped to pieces at his own 15 yard-line.

FIRST DOWN: SOMETHING SPECIAL snaps to TOASTER. TOASTER is made out of metal and has lever on side. Ball depresses lever and is subsequently popped up into the air thirty seconds later. Incomplete pass (Fig. A).

SECOND DOWN: TOASTER in shotgun formation. CROCODILE and THE FLOOR in the back field. TOASTER takes snap and pitches to THE FLOOR. THE FLOOR can't move and is down by contact.

THIRD DOWN: TOASTER looks deep to WALTER PAYTON, the NFL's all-time leading rusher to who died of bile duct cancer in 1999. Pass deflected by Dawkins, who is standing over PAYTON's mutilated corpse (Fig. E).
FOURTH DOWN: 14 FOOT POLE WITH PHONE ON TOP punts, Dante Hall signals for fair catch at his own 10.

NFL PLAYERS TAKE POSSESSION.
FIRST DOWN: Michael Vick takes the snap and runs 95 yards for touchdown. He just left OLDER/YOUNGER standing there. Extra point by Elam is good.
(7-0 HUMANS)

KICK-OFF: PIECES OF PLASTIC BAG field kick at the 15 and promptly float up into the night (down at the 50).

FIRST DOWN: TOASTER tries to move ten yards for first down, but is totally deflected by Sapp at the line of scrimmage. A frustrated Lombardi sends HOT PLATE into game.

SECOND DOWN: HOT PLATE takes snap, looks to 10 LBS. OF ATLANTIS which is a mythical object and therefore not open or present in any real way. Attempts tough throw to UNFRIENDLY PARROT AND UNFRIENDLY WORM, who are double covered because they are two separate entities, although they only count as one receiver because they are a worm and a parrot, and are here only because they are soulmates and cannot be separated, especially in failure.

Pass is incomplete.
THIRD DOWN: Despite Lombardi's loud indications to the contrary, Inanimate objects inexplicably line up for field goal on third down. BOTH BIBLES hold for MY PALACE. MY PALACE is so ornate, so fragile with beauty that it shudders with anticipation and crumbles all over the field (Fig. B). BOTH BIBLES sneak down to the sideline before one of the many, invariably hyper-Christian, All-Pros reluctantly smoothers them with great care and devotion.
FOURTH DOWN: HOT PLATE goes for the sneak, but is stopped just short by Julius Peppers.

NFL PLAYERS TAKE POSSESSION.
FIRST DOWN: Charles Barkley sends Sapp into the game. He has been playing some offense this year. Sapp somehow gets the snap and throws a fifty-yard bomb to Harrison in the end zone. He's never done this this year! Horrible pass coverage by fan favorite ART FORUM, aka the "Brocoli Man." Lombardi's seen enough of this guy and pulls him. For now.
(14-0 HUMANS)

KICK-OFF: Flush with light and air, THE PIECES OF THE BAG THAT HAVE NOT ALREADY BEEN EATEN BY THE TEAM MASCOT, (that mascot being an actual dog with human nails), field Elam's kick at the 20. The ball is bigger than any of them and nothing happens. Ladies and gentlemen, the "Brocoli Man" is back in the game, and it looks like he's here to stay!
FIRST DOWN: HOT PLATE hits ALLIGATOR on a short slant. The ball gets lodged in its unmistakable mouth of fitness and the alligator thrashes around like a beast in the woods. (Fig. D) It's an ALLIGATOR so no one really wants to tangle with it, but eventually Woodson taps its armor-plated eyelid and the ref whistles the ALLIGATOR down by contact. The ALLIGATOR stops thrashing but keeps the ball in its mouth, sitting ominously in a decisive fashion despite multiple delay of game penalties. All Lombardi can do is smile and sigh. It's football, and you've gotta love it.

SUPER NFL ALL-PRO TEAM

ROSTER

COACH: Charles Barkley

OFFENSE

QB: Michael Vick
RB: Priest Holmes, Ahman Green
TE: Jeremy Shockey
WR: Marvin Harrison, Randy Moss, Terrell Owens, Joe Horn
TACKLES: Lincoln Kennedy, Jon Ogden
CENTER: Barrett Robbins
GUARDS: Alan Fanece, Will Shields

DEFENSE

ENDS: Michael Strahan, Julius Peppers
OLB: Derrick Brooks, Joey Porter
ILB: Brian Urlacher
TACKLES: Warren Sapp
CORNERS: Champ Bailey, Troy Vincent

SPECIALISTS

PUNTER: Todd Sauerbrun
KICKER: Jason Elam
KICK RETURNER: Dante Hall, Michael Lewis

VS.

We have brought ourselves together with the National Football League and a random collection of inanimate objects, some of which aren't technically inanimate, to determine the veracity of Mr. Michaels' off-hand, and nevertheless totally fabricated, statement. The objects will be coached by Vince Lombardi, the greatest mind to ever stalk the sidelines next to the gridiron, and the players will be at the mercy of Charles Barkley, the loud-mouthed basketball commentator who is smarter than you think but still terrible at coaching football.

SOME INANIMATE OBJECTS

ROSTER

COACH: Vince Lombardi

OFFENSE

QB: Toaster
RB: Crocodile, The Floor
TE: Red Things
WR: Walter Payton, 10lbs of Atlantis
Unfriendly Parrot and Unfriendly Worm
TACKLES: Nose drops, Ashtray
CENTER: Something Special
GUARDS: Shoelace, Both Bibles

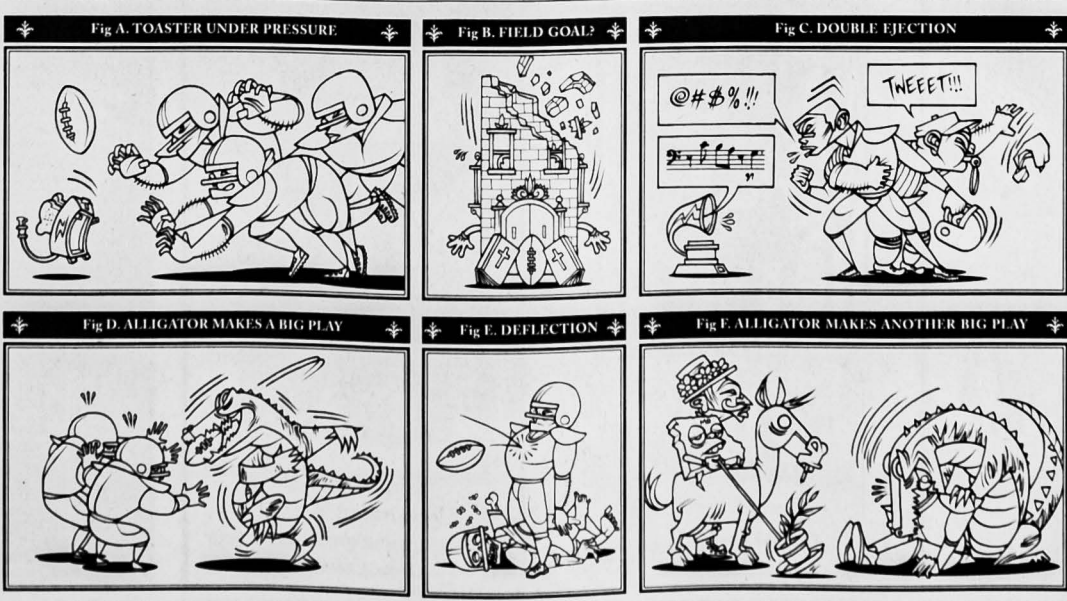
DEFENSE

ENDS: Buttons, Pencil
OLB: Latin Grammy, Fork
ILB: License Plate, Yearbook
SAFETIES: Art forum, Older/Younger
CORNERS: Missouri (the state), The Duke (the person)

SPECIALISTS

PUNTER: 14 ft. Pole with Phone on Top
KICKER: My Palace
KICK RETURNER: Plastic Bag From Other Country

HIGHLIGHTS

2ND
QUARTER

PLAY BY PLAY

SUPER NFL ALL-PRO TEAM TAKES POSSESSION OF BALL AT THE INANIMATE OBJECTS' 5.
FIRST DOWN: Vick takes the snap, sees Moss wide open in the end zone. He lobs it to avoid the ALLIGATOR WHICH IS STILL ON THE FIELD AND STANDS NINE FEET TALL WHEN PERCHED ON ITS HIND LEGS. Moss elevates to make a one-handed grab, but is ensnared in mid-air by the LATIN GRAMMY's gilded and hot-blooded embrace. Flags are thrown, Moss and LATIN GRAMMY exchange cross-cultural pleasantries and new kinds of puns. Both are ejected. (Fig. C)
SECOND DOWN: Lombardi has the defense lined up in a one-of-a-kind, utterly ingenious, fail-safe run-prevent defense, but Faulk finds a hole and scores anyway.
(21-0 HUMANS)

KICK-OFF: Though he was previously cut from the team, CROCODILE runs onto the field from the eleven depths of swampish cacophony and tackles BAG. Down at the 20.
(ALLIGATOR EATS THE CROCODILE.)
FIRST DOWN: HOT PLATE throws to RED THINGS, who are very bright and angry, but still only a category. Brooks recovers the fumble. The dance is on!

NFL PLAYERS TAKE POSSESSION.
FIRST DOWN: Long strike to Owens, who beat MICHIGAN down low. MICHIGAN, a tract of land whose boundaries were marked in sand following the U.S. Postal Wars,

loves riding horses and taking talking plants for walks. Long walks. Owens scampers past THE DUKE, a servant of the court if ever there was one, a prize 'o crimson roses a-robbed upon his head. THE ALLIGATOR makes another big play. First down. (Fig. G)

SIDELINE INTERVIEW:
LISA GUERRERO: Joe, how does it feel to have to beat a super-competitor like ART FORUM for those crucial extra yards late in a game with people watching?
JOE HORN: "Coach always tells us that they had many great issues back in the seventies, but that was the era of deadball minimalism and no one had the speed they do today. Were they tyrants in their time, or are they super-competitors? In week six their schedule gets rough and let's see how they take it."
LISA GUERRERO: Thanks Joe. Back to you, fart head.

FIRST DOWN: Vick sees Shockey with some room. With the BUTTONS and LICENSE PLATE coming in on the blitz, there was nothing for him to do but talk about how great this game is going. Another massive, game-breaking display of excellence. Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown! Oh.
(28-0 HUMANS)

THE FLOOR has not gotten enough playing time and runs off in protest. Nowhere to go. Objects forfeit. Game over. End of the world.

FINAL	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	T
NFL	21	7	(End of the World)		28
INANIMATE OBJECTS	0	0	(End of the World)		0



BY NATHANIEL FRIEDMAN & JACOB WEINSTEIN

SPORT & LEISURE

ARDUOUS DIVERSIONS FOR THE NOVICE SLOTH

HOUSEBREAKING THE OVERDOGS

BY HENRY WILLIAM BROWNEJOHNS

Most of the United States is quietly pleased that the big-money New York Yankees have been beaten in this late World Series, because Americans, in a broad and perverse stroke of irony, are underdog-lovers. We get this from our cultural forebears, the English. The English, at least, have a history that legitimates the cult of the little guy that validates their preference for David over Goliath and explains their patronage by St. George, who certainly didn't have the odds on the Dragon.

Americans taking this stance, though, are just being fickle, and they have proven that they will abandon the plight of the underdog the moment the underdog is anybody other than themselves. That's the irony. The imperial hegemony of the New York Yankees had gotten so profound that even a surprising number of New Yorkers—Americans by default—were even pulling for an upset, and, no, not all of them were epicuracious Mets fans. So now they have got one, courtesy of the plain Florida Marlins. What to do with it?

Baseball autistics can bore a dinner guest for seven courses, easily, with talk of streaks and curses and raw statistical coincidence. So let's try our hand at it ourselves, if only to occupy space: From 1996 to 2000, the Yankees and their bloated payroll won three out of the four World Series, and became the notorious dynasty that is known as familiarly by schoolboys in Istanbul as by construction workers in North Jersey. During this period, the Yankees made quite a few comebacks, and their fan-support swelled from coast to coast, excluding the Back Bay. And in America, generally, those were pretty good times—economic surpluses, record employment, negotiators at the tables in Israel and Korea. Optimism, generally, reigned with the revitalized Yanks.

Then, a month after Mr. Jeter hoisted his last trophy, we had the Florida electoral deba-

cle, where the only underdog was the American democratic system, and we entered a new era altogether. At about the same time, the clamor about the Yankees' bullying dominance began to turn against them, so that, even in the lingering dust-cloud of September 11th, the nation was ambivalent about them, and heaved a sigh of relief when Arizona beat them on the last pitch of the Series. The Yankees have not won a World Series since.

When things were palmy and fine in America, the Yankees, with all their abhorrent wealth and sound, fundamental baseball, dominated the world. Now, Florida has struck again, and as a nation of fickle underdog-lovers, we continue to root against our own former glory.

The Yankees have lots of money—like America did; the Yankees have a great tradition of winning—like America did; the Yankees are known the world over as an immediately recognizable symbol of worth and goodness—like, you know. But now America and the Yankees have entered this late, little Dark Age, and both have been losing everything that once made them Great—taxes on the rich and Paul O'Neill in right field. If Americans can still find it in their bellies to root hard against the Yankees, then why can they not understand it when the world roots hard against us? Who out there takes a secret glee in seeing Mr. Jeter or the erstwhile Mr. Clemens listed in the injury column? This is probably how Abdul Q. Public feels reading the casualty lists of the American occupying forces in Iraq and Afghanistan—bad, but good. If the American people think that they are going to ride the Florida Marlins to a new Gilded Age, then they deserve what miserable, protracted disappointment they are going to get.

Henry William Brownejohns is Assistant Editor at THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT.

This is what I remember about my first bike: it was a hand-me-down, it was red, and when I looked back one day in Smithfield Park in New Jersey, my father had let go and I was riding, really riding it for the first time. I had some good times on that little department store bike, but the day came when I was too big for it. I needed a new bike. This would be my first brand-new bike ever, and boy was I excited!

My parents took my brother and me to the bike shop, an uncannily masculine place, reeking of grease and sweat and filled with strange tools and weird-looking 1970s race bikes (you didn't call 'em road bikes then, they were "racers" or "10-speeds") from Renault and Peugeot. I had a nagging fear that my parents would get me a wimpy-looking bike, that I would look like a sissy on a little kid's bike next to my older brother, who was bound to get something macho. I prayed that my new bike wouldn't have a basket on it, because that would mark me as a wuss in the cruel third grade world I was about to enter.

My mom called my brother and me over to look at two Ross Apollos, a metallic brown 3-speed with a cool "stick-shift" shifter and a black 5-speed. They were the coolest bikes I had ever seen. "These are nice. Do you boys like these bikes?" she asked.

"Yeah! Please let me get one of these!" I shouted, brimming with excitement. My brother shared my opinion in his reserved 10-year-old way.

"I want the brown one," he said. And just like that, we had our new bikes. My Ross Apollo 5-speed served me well for what seemed like ages, though it was really just a few years. I went trail-riding with my brother in Virginia at about the same time Gary Fisher and Joe Breeze were riding their clunkers down the hills of Marin County. We rode our bikes everywhere and enjoyed a freedom and mobility that most kids today don't get to experience. That bike was my trusty steed, my getaway car, my friend.

Bicycles still have the power to evoke those feelings in me. I love going to a bike shop and looking at the shiny new bikes, talking with the

SIMPLE MACHINES

The New Gear & The New Slang

BY ALTAY AKGUN

staff, seeing what better mouse-trap the industry has come up with. People who run bike shops get that same feeling every October in Las Vegas at InterBike, the bicycle industry's annual trade show. I spoke with Jed Kornbluh, the sales manager at Bicycle Therapy at 2211 South Street, shortly after this year's show. When I asked him what the next big thing was, he answered without hesitation. "Shimano 10-speed. The new Dura-Ace 10-speed group works great and looks great."

Let me provide an English translation for the convenience of my readers. Dura-Ace is Shimano's flagship road "group", comprising most of the moving parts on a bicycle (think chain, shifters, brakes, etc.). When bike geeks say "10-speed" they mean the number of cogs (gears) on the rear wheel, not the total number of "speeds", or combinations of front and rear sprockets, available. Dura-Ace is currently the only Shimano ten-speed equipment group, but lower-priced 10-speed groups will be available in short order. Consumers should also expect a trickle-down effect as entry- and mid-level bikes now spec'd with 8-speed groups move to 9-speed groups, according to Kornbluh. As a bonus, the new 10-speed group is compatible with older 8/9-speed rear hubs, meaning that you can still use your older Shimano-compatible wheels with the new Dura-Ace 10.

An encouraging trend was on display at Interbike this year: the low-cost, well-equipped "city bike". An excellent example is the Kona Smoke, built on a no-nonsense steel mountain bike frame. The bike retails for under \$400 and comes with fenders, 26" slick tires and an 8-speed drivetrain. Kornbluh explained that there has been a great demand in recent years for solid, affordable bikes for commuting to work or school. "The industry is

reacting to an unmet need for this kind of bike. You don't want suspension if you are riding to work, and you don't want a thousand-dollar road bike," he opined. But you do want to feel confident that you can ride your bike down the steps at City Hall, right? So buy quality. Though you can buy a bike for less at Wal-Mart, and other -Marts, the frame and parts will be lower quality, and you won't get the professional assembly, warranty work, and support a bike shop provides. Plus, you will suffer the humiliation of riding a Huffo or Pacific.

But listen, even if you are riding a Huffo or a Pacific, it's better than walking. My favorite urban riders are the "wheely possies," groups of black kids who ride around on decrepit bikes that were lousy when they were new, doing wheelies. I've seen a kid ride a wheely for blocks on a bare rim, no tire. These kids are not elitists when it comes to their bikes, they just want to get together and ride wheelies for a few hours. Kids that can barely reach the pedals try to race me down the block, just for fun.

Almost all kids love bikes, but somehow that love is lost once they are old enough to drive. Where is the love, people? Why do some people go from riding a bike every day to honking and throwing soda bottles at bike riders? I think it's a symptom of our culture's car obsession; an adult riding a bike is suspicious because that is not what the TV shows us every day. Right now, when you see someone riding a bike on TV, it's usually in an SUV commercial (message: you can put your bike in here); there is also the occasional bike messenger used to establish urban context.

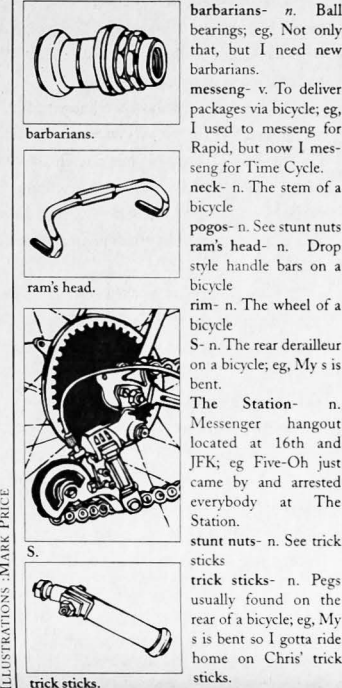
Maybe if we were bombarded with images of sexy people shopping for new bikes in glittering showrooms, or rampaging through national parks on burly backwoods bikes, then

riding home, we would have a different perspective. And why not? A bike can actually help get you laid, provided you ride it regularly. Even if you are really, really fat, you won't be for long if you ride your bike everywhere, trust me. In contrast, there is no automobile that will make you thinner.

In closing, if you feel the old belt tightening on Thanksgiving, dust off your bike and take it for a ride. It's fun and not nearly as hard as running. Don't worry if your bike isn't the latest thing, just slap some grease on the chain, inflate the tires and go. You will not regret it.

Altay Akgun writes on bicycles for THE INDEPENDENT.

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A

Art & Letters

L

THE LIES WERE GETTING OUT OF CONTROL

fiction

THE PETRUSKI

BY MOSHE ZVI MARVIT

PETRUSKI'S EULOGY

"You were a good man, Petruski¹. You did good things². Then you died and now you're dead. But, you were a good man, Petruski. I remember³.

"One could ask who you were⁴, Petruski; but then they didn't know you; then they won't know you. You were Petruski⁵; you were Pieter⁶; you were Pip⁷; and you were Peter⁸. Today we stand here to lay you and wake you in hallow mourning.

"What you did is how we know you⁹. How we know you is why we're here. I know you. I saw what you did¹⁰. I saw your walk and I saw you work. I watched your vast gait and your little workshop. I know what you did inside. You made furniture¹¹. You made chairs¹² and tables¹³ and beds¹⁴ and cabinets¹⁵ and a couple of gazebos even¹⁶. But you did more, more than just furniture. Though furniture's important¹⁷.

"If you could look about this room¹⁸, Petruski, you would see your life. You made these chairs; you made that table; you made this podium, though you always called it a lectern or a pew¹⁹. You carved this casket²⁰. You didn't create the wood, but you formed the furniture²¹. And wood dies and rots²², but furniture is finished and immortal²³. Before you there was no furniture²⁴; without you, what would have lived in this room²⁵?

"Today is Tuesday. Yesterday was Monday and before that it was Sunday. Sunday's yesterday was Saturday; Saturday is the day you died.

"Late September possessed you. Late September, early October, excited you. Petruski, with a crooked neck²⁶ you walked through fall-

en foliage, kicking as you stepped²⁷. At night, as the hourly Christmas chimes chimed²⁸, one could see you stopped, sometimes stooped, inside this gazebo²⁹, that gazebo³⁰, your gazebo³¹, with your arms in a playful oriental position. In the square where the gazebos sit you stood and pretended things³². What you did I saw, but what you did I cannot tell.

"In that town square you walked³³. You circled the square with your workshop not in the center, but as your focus. You walked about the square and I saw you seeing the moon. It was an epochal tyrant to you, soon to be usurped by neon and steel³⁴. You asked the moon rhetorical questions³⁵, Petruski, and pitied its silence. I could hear you asking the moon if it was waxing or waning³⁶. You called her 'gibbous' and addressed her softly. Petruski, I don't think she ever even knew your name.

"Do you remember the Coney Island Diner³⁷, Petruski? Opened in 1919 and having the best deal in town is what the neon would swear³⁸. Three burgers, a hot dog, a cup of coffee, and a slice of pie for two sixty eight; and you agreed. Orange and red booths that you built buttressed the room while waitresses with twelve hotdogs³⁹ in each arm darted through the rows. You used to giggle. Petruski you giggled.

"Petruski, from your back pocket I could see your curled up paper-back⁴⁰. Creased in the middle and worn down from a full-bodied laugh, I saw it. You once recited a line to me, a marvelous line⁴¹. Petruski, you told me that a man was only a city⁴²; Petruski you were a town. Petruski you built a town.

¹ He generally believed that Petruski was a good man in the tautological sense: good is good; if he was not good then he would not be good; but he was good so he was good. It was no more complicated than that because it needn't be. A good man, by oratory definition, is one who lived in the shadow of the good. For literal purposes he would rather conceive of "good" as one who lived in the light of the good, but for literary purposes he needed to imagine it as one who lived in the shadow—literally a limited obscurity of light—of the good.

Life in the light of the good was coincident with the Platonic conception of the good; or perhaps it was neo-Platonic, that is, Plotinian. Individuality was the weight by which the soul descended. It was good, but concurrently it caused a separation and created distance from good. Individuality was the key to understanding the good as it manifested itself. This coincidence of theory was purely coincidental.

Life in the light of the good was also coincidental with the youthful conception of baseball, as a game or specific game. An individual game was good not necessarily because of any one action or player, or even a series of actions. It was good because it stayed in line with itself. The game of baseball is good on a broader scale. It is good because of the goodness found therein, both symbolically and actually. No individual game can make this not so.

Generally, his definition and logic were very simple. Specifically, the proof of Petruski's goodness was ordinal and discrete. There was no series of specific acts that thematized and congealed would canalize a contiguous path of good; there were only individual acts, which, though related, remained unrelated in perceptual acquisition and logical divestation. Petruski would pick his grapes on the night of the first frost; that was good. Petruski always wore a sports coat, white shirt, slacks, and shined shoes, even when he worked; that was good. Petruski made furniture for others; that was very good. These and other specifics, incommensurable when acquired and respectively incommensurable when presented, were at one time added and averaged for a mean calculus of Petruski's good. In this respect, the general argument is flawed. It consolidates specifics and presents a generality. But since this is not an argument, but rather a series of statements of premises, then the generalities need not support the specifics; and the road from the specific to the general remain outside the realm of logic, whether formal or informal.

² He meant that statement most of all. ³ The act of remembering is the act of confessing. The movement of time in remembrance is the gathering up of one's senses; it is owning up to one's life. The remembering of Petruski is the confession of Petruski, in both the

subjective and the objective genitive. The 'I' preceding 'remember' modifies and sufficiently sums up the verb.

⁴ No one ever asked Petruski who he was. This fact may have been so for two reasons. It may have been that everyone already knew who Petruski was; that knowledge of Petruski was the sight of Petruski. Or it may have been that there is no polite vocative query on one's existential or ontological or ontic presence. One thing is certain. If someone had asked Petruski who he was, Petruski would have answered. Petruski had an answer.

⁵ Petruski is a Polish name.

⁶ Pieter was his name.

⁷ When Petruski was young, he decided to take the 'i' out of 'Pieter'. But Petruski did not want to waste the 'i'; he didn't want to throw out what belonged to him. So he decided to make the 'i' his middle name. 'i' became 'I'. People mistook the upright letter for his middle initial, but it was his middle name proper. Petruski's plan to become Peter never came to fruition. He remained Petruski, though sometimes he was P.I.P.

⁸ Pieter and Peter sound identical, but they are different; they are spelled different. No one heard Peter; all heard Pieter.

⁹ For the orator, the what must be linked to the how. In order to be full, the ordinary interrogative pronoun of neuter gender must be linked to its dative sense. This movement more tightly showed the connection between the specifics and the general. This understanding was the primordial phenomenological shift that allowed the orator to begin the interrogation of Petruski.

¹⁰ This statement and the one preceding it are identical in the mind of the orator.

¹¹ The making of furniture was Petruski's primary occupation, though he also made religious goods. He began making only furniture, but inevitably found the cross-structures that supported the crafted pieces. The day Petruski found the cross in the chair was February 26. Petruski picked it up as a piece of a chair, looked for its adjoining side, held it up, remarked surely, "There it is," and realized that he was holding a cross. Petruski thought highly of this event.

¹² Chairs were symbolically and practically important to Petruski. The combined seated and upright nature of the chair gave Petruski cause to wonder, and wonder he did. "In it," he would say, "man can be a man." A man could be upright and contemplative, while remaining removed and linked from nature. One time Petruski looked up the definition of the word 'chair'. Petruski marveled at the word's Greek origin of "Kathedra", and saw it as man's primordial link to God. Petruski knew that Man and God both sat upright.

¹³ Petruski always equated the table

with the workbench. For this reason, Petruski found a mystical cycle between the table and the chair. Man used the table to build the chair, which ultimately made him a man.

¹⁴ Petruski made few beds. Although the bed was a symbol of love for him, it remained his anathema. In his workshop, Petruski could only make the hard and oft forgotten part of the bed.

¹⁵ Cabinets were a physical manifestation of obscurity for Petruski. The cabinet's main purpose and function was obscuring what needed to be out of sight. This held great importance to Petruski.

¹⁶ After a large blizzard, several of the secondary gazebos of the town became crooked. Petruski took it upon himself to even them out when no one was looking.

¹⁷ This was the premise.

¹⁸ The room appeared to be a dark umber, punctuated slightly by hints of ROY and hints of BIV. There was no piece of furniture that was not contiguous on at least one of its sides with another piece of furniture. Pine embraced oak caressed mahogany touched maple met cypress like cedar and balsa with cherry and redwood as in no known forest.

¹⁹ Petruski hated the word, "podium."

Petruski felt that it was not a proper symbol of the presence of a pew.

²⁰ Petruski carved the casket, but he did not make the lining. The lining was sewn and fitted by a man who didn't know Petruski, who never heard of Petruski and probably never expressed any interest in acquainting himself with Petruski. The man's name was known by no one in the room.

²¹ Furniture was biblical for Petruski.

²² Furniture was Greek for Petruski.

²³ Furniture was Hegelian poetry for Petruski.

²⁴ This statement was not absolute, but it was nonetheless relevant.

²⁵ It was not out of line for the orator to ask such things.

²⁶ Petruski's neck was not straight because there were few times that he looked straight forward. When he worked, he looked down. When he walked he looked up. When he stood, he often closed his eyes.

²⁷ The sound and feel of crunching leaves under his soles, made Petruski think about life. These thoughts were invigorating for him. The kicks were the rhythmic happening of invigoration.

²⁸ Petruski heard the Christmas bells ring in the fall for two reasons. This brief autumnal period reminded Petruski of Christmas. In addition, Christmas bells chime year-round in the town.

²⁹ The orator pointed north.

³⁰ The orator pointed northeast.

³¹ The orator emphatically pointed north.

³² Without pretension, Petruski pretended things.

³³ Everyone in the town knew this.

³⁴ Petruski's movements around the

square were regular to one who paid careful attention. The square was his general orbit; but his movement was defined by an invisible deferential epicyle.

³⁵ Petruski viewed the moon as a generational icon. When people ceased to interrogate the moon, Petruski believed, the moon would fade but not return.

³⁶ Petruski asked the moon many questions, including its age, its thoughts, its destination, and what it would do to make a better chair. Even though many of the questions were rhetorical, Petruski always waited for response. None was given.

³⁷ The moon's cycles were not of concern to Petruski for any astronomical, or even astrological, reason. It simply was of great personal concern to Petruski to know of the moon's goings on.

³⁸ Petruski would have remembered the Coney Island Diner. The Coney Island Diner was located across the street from the bus station, adjacent to the town square. At three in the morning, alone Petruski would go to the diner for a sundowner and coffee. A man named Gant would sit at the bar and woo the waitress with tales that perfunctorily told of his time in the south; and Petruski would listen and dream dreams of the uncharted south. He always associated the south with the smell of eggs on beef between buns.

³⁹ The neon spoke this in a cursive font that is no longer used.

⁴⁰ Petruski once made a joke about a hot dog. A waitress dropped several on the floor and as she bent over to pick them up, Petruski grabbed her arm and said, "Let sleeping dogs lie."

⁴¹ There was a picture of a waterfall on the paperback. It was a black and white waterfall in New Jersey State, emphasizing the bridge over the falls. The bridge was flanked by cliffs and had twelve vertical columns on each arc. It was the Passaic Falls. Petruski first picked up this copy of "Paterson" partly because of the picture of the Passaic Falls on the front, but primarily because he liked the author's name. He believed that a man with the name William Carlos Williams could be a poet.

⁴² The line was actually seven lines. They read,

"There is no ease.
We close our eyes,
get what we use
and pay. He owes
who cannot, double.
Use. Ask no whys?
None wants our eyes."

⁴³ Petruski believed that every story was built off the structure of one of two essential formats. The first was the man as the city or city as the man; while the second remained two people lying in bed. Each of these was the essential core of all action that could be repeated and retold. "From now on," Petruski once said, "I will only tell stories of two people lying in bed."

PETRUSKI'S YOUTH - I

⁴³ "Before me is you⁴⁴. All that I do I do for you⁴⁵. Why would I say this if it were not true?⁴⁶ I look down at these hands⁴⁷, think about what they do, and wish that they could do so for you. I look up from my hands⁴⁸ and wonder if I could speak to you without looking down at my hands⁴⁹. I wonder if this is what you want⁵⁰. I wonder if I could give you what you want⁵¹. I wonder if I want to give you what you want⁵². These things I wonder⁵³.

"I wrote this letter to say certain things. I am reading this letter to say certain things. Certain things need to be said. Because with certain things being said, certain things fall out⁵⁴.

"You are Greta, while I am Petruski⁵⁵. I like this and I would like to keep things this way. But you being you and I being I we could still be we⁵⁶. This much I have seen and this much I am certain⁵⁷.

"It is hard to think of a time before you⁵⁸. I don't know why. When I think of why you and I are as we are, I don't know why⁵⁹. Significant feelings arise from insignificant happenings; I don't know

why⁶⁰. But they exist and we are as we are and I am willing to accept that. Because that much is true⁶¹.

"My body makes me uncomfortable⁶². It makes you uncomfortable⁶³. It simply⁶⁴ is not seductive. I look at my body and wonder how this could be so⁶⁵. I look at it and wonder how it could be so⁶⁶. I move deliberately and know that my desirability wanes with each deliberate motion. I move naturally and I forget that you are there⁶⁷. I move and I don't as I suppose. Actual movement obscures intended movement. What remains is stillness. A point⁶⁸. I Petruski⁶⁹ become a point. But then I speak and now I'm speaking⁷⁰.

"I am speaking what I have written⁷¹. I wrote because I would forget⁷². I wrote because you would forget⁷³. I wrote so I could speak and we would not forget. Because once we have forgotten, there remains nothing left to do⁷⁴. Once we forget, I wouldn't know what to do⁷⁵.

"But I remember⁷⁶. I remember what I knew⁷⁷: that I am Peter, you remain Greta and this is all there is.⁷⁸

⁴³ Everything before this sentence was crossed out. The thoughts on history, ideas on the impetus and potency of time, all of it had been violently scratched off the page. It was relevant, but this was neither the time nor the place.

⁴⁴ This sentence was the most significant; it was the letter. Petruski had ten different possible versions of this beginning:

You are before me.
You exist before me.
You come before me.
Before me comes you.
Before me you hold importance.
In the world I see, you are in front of me.
In time, in priority, and in space, you are before me.
Erasmus once said...

I know you before I know myself.
You are the east and I the west.

Although the ability to multiply phrases gave Petruski a sort of literary tickle, none were right but the simplest: In this version there were implications and innuendos that were purposive. Petruski felt that this beginning was revolutionary. Rule I: In the beginning be revolutionary.

⁴⁵ This sentence was crossed out, but it was read.

⁴⁶ Petruski asked this not out of personal doubt, but out of possible doubt. It was a general doubt that was sympathetic.

⁴⁷ As he wrote, Petruski looked down at his hands. They were soft and white, like a child's. And though each bothered him independently, they felt good together. Each chubby ivory hand, with weak fingers, and gnawed-on nails, seemed independent of him. But together, as they held an object or worked in unison with purpose, they were Petruski's hands.

⁴⁸ As he read, Petruski looked up from his hands.

⁴⁹ The soft white refuge...

⁵⁰ Petruski often wondered about things wonderful. He also marveled upon things marvelous.

⁵¹ Petruski saw himself as the bearer of satisfaction for Greta. He did not see himself as strictly such, but felt that the fulfillment of his role would mean the becoming of a unique satisfaction. This satisfaction, though necessarily particular in order to produce the demand required, could only be deduced from the most general of generalities. Petruski watched carefully all the relationships that he saw. He then thought about each. From these he deduced a series of fourteen carefully crafted rules that could generally rule over every relationship. Petruski lived by this list of rules.

⁵² This secondary question quickly took primary importance, as secondary questions are wont to do. It was the condition that allowed the possibility, or lack thereof, of all that precedes it.

⁵³ There were fourteen categories of which Petruski wondered. These were the fourteen questions that led to the fourteen answers that became the fourteen rules to live by.

⁵⁴ Rule II: Nothing is said or done without something, or some things, other becoming a creation from these things. Know well the situation and phrase well your reaction. Rule II: Be a poet.

⁵⁵ Rule III: You are who you are; think hard about this. But also remember those around you.

⁵⁶ Rule IV: Keep relationships in order, because there is an order to relationships.

⁵⁷ Rule V: It is important to be certain. Without certainty you have nothing.

⁵⁸ Petruski found this at once disturbing and comforting. It was comforting because it created constancy in his life and memory. It was disturbing because it grew out of a series past, and most probably future, of radical change.

⁵⁹ Rule VI: Some things you cannot be certain of. Understand this and accept this. Be quick to admit it.

⁶⁰ Case in point.

⁶¹ Rule VII: Accept a truth. It doesn't matter which one, simply a truth. Without it you lose.

⁶² This Petruski knew.

⁶³ This Petruski had come to realize.

⁶⁴ Artlessly...

⁶⁵ Petruski surveyed his body in mirrors.

⁶⁶ Petruski looked at his body from the bottom up. He spent the most time on the region of the unfortunate scalene between his hipbones, meeting at his navel.

⁶⁷ With this statement, Petruski imagined old ladies scheming over scribbled napkins in a coffee shop. Their motions are quick, halted, but it rhythm with each other due to years of scheming. They are bundled up because of the winter.

⁶⁸ Rule VIII: Though a point does not exist in nature, it can exist in our imaginations. Feel free to build off of the points.

⁶⁹ I. Petruski

⁷⁰ Petruski felt that the point must oscillate; it must move. As the point moved it remained where it began. It would move in place and this would create a sound. That sound is his voice, breaking in the temporary residence in the resonant gap between maturity and immaturity.

⁷¹ Rule IX: Read what you write or else you're just a dandy on the moon.

⁷² Rule X: Unless you try hard, you

will forget. Forgetting meant more than the simple passive action of forgetting. Forgetting meant more of a loss of self. When one forgets, he forgets purpose, loses meaning, and acts as a point with no line. Refer to Rule VIII.

⁷³ Rule XI: What is true for you is usually true for another.

⁷⁴ Rule XII: Always have a premise, preferably a conscious premise. If you remember then you remain your own premise. If you forget then you must reside in a tautological world, where an action is only as large as the action. This life is a tragedy.

⁷⁵ Petruski was desperate when he wrote this statement and he could not contain his despair as he recited it. For this possibility scared him most of all.

⁷⁶ Rule XIII: Always take care to remember. Only a constant care would prevent the passive and passionless act of forgetting from occurring. The natural lemma to this rule was its converse: Never forget. This lemma bridged the way to the fourteenth rule.

⁷⁷ Rule XIV: If you forget, begin again at the beginning.

⁷⁸ Remembrance also served as a form of learning for Petruski. Remembrance was the recollection and reviewing of meaning in a new context. To remember was also to learn.

⁷⁹ Petruski took the piece of torn yellowed legal paper and folded it up, quietly slipping it into his pocket. The letter was his. Petruski wrote it for Greta and the words and sentences now belonged to her. But it also still belonged to Petruski. He gave as much as he could to Greta, but Petruski would not part with the paper, for this was never hers. Nothing more was said on the matter.

PETRUSKI'S YOUTH - II

"Do you want to see a dead prostitute's house? There is one. Over there, in that direction, there is a dead prostitute's house. I mean she didn't own it, but we can go there. I mean, not legally, but we can still go there. Because it's not hers. To see it. I don't know whose it is, but we can go there. It won't be legal, I think, but we can go there. Tonight we should go there. Do you want to go there? She's not there. But we should go there. Because she's dead.

"What do you want to do tonight, Petruski? We've got to do something tonight, Petruski. Because we've got the night tonight and we can't go to sleep. We've got to set things straight. Tonight, we've got to right things. I mean just the way we've been living. Sleeping and waking is all. The hours aren't right. These hours aren't right. But in the morning things will seem right. Not the morning, but in the morning's night, things will be right. What do you want to do tonight?

"What if we play Snatch, Petruski? We could play Snatch. It's a game I like to think about; but we could play. It's a game where you walk around and look for an Asian baby. You look for Asian babies, one at a time, cute ones, really cute ones. Like the ones whose cheeks you want to squeeze, because they're cute. Not babies, but young, like one or two or three. Five maybe; I don't know how old kids are. But ones that you would call babies. Like the ones that you would pass on the street and say to me, if you were with me, 'that's a cute baby, blond John.' And I'd agree. Because it is a cute baby. It would end there. Snatch takes it further. Now you snatch the baby. If you're playing you snatch it. I mean you don't snatch it, but you touch its head and say 'Snatch.' So you Snatch it without snatching it. That's Snatch, it you want to play Snatch. But it's past midnight, so I don't know if we can play Snatch. But we should play Snatch. Maybe tomorrow.

"Let's take a walk tonight, Petruski. We can't sit here like a bunch of morning doves. Either way the time will pass. But this way we'll be moving, like the time, but in a different direction. The time has to pass. I mean to set things right. Otherwise we'll fall asleep. Right here, you and I. Like morning doves. And we'll wake if we don't walk. And there's those gay hours. They'll wait for us, right by our window, mocking us, like a bunch of morning doves. Three hours like three morning doves; but not in the morning. Right in the middle of

the day, they'll wait, if we don't set things right. If we fall asleep and then wake up. So let's take a walk. We'll get up and take a walk, and when we return the moon will be over there and we'll be back here waiting for the moon to fall down there. Isn't she pretty, Petruski, the moon?

"If we don't walk then we should look at this magazine I have. We don't have to read it because it has pictures. We can look at it together. It has pictures of naked ladies. Pretty ones. I mean, the pictures are pretty; as pretty as pictures can be. But the naked ladies are pretty too. Not more than the moon. Because they're naked and in pictures. But still we should look at the magazine. When we're finished you can have it. Like a present. Or lots of presents. Each page a present like each page is a picture. You can have it. When we're finished you should take it. But if you take it, when you take it, don't forget to hide it. Some things should be hidden when they're not looked at.

"Petruski, have I told you the story of my sweater? I mean it wasn't my sweater, but it is now; and it is half way through the story. Do you want to hear the story? Should I tell it to you now? It's a pretty good story, if you want to hear it. And it's true.

"I had a party, and the party ended. In the morning I found a sweater. It was small, but it was dirty, like a girl. It was soft like a girl. Always small and soft like a girl. Sometimes dirty like a girl. But I cleaned it. Now it was small and clean, but still soft. I looked for the girl, the one who went with the sweater. If I found her then she would have found it and she would wear it and it would be worn and she would be warm. When it would get cold she would rub her elbow and top of her arm and sort of cuddle with herself, with her arm, with the sweater. And the sweater would feel good, because of the soft grope. But I didn't find her. I kept the sweater. Because it was so soft, even though it was too small, it was nice to touch. And I carried it around, the sweater, in my hands; it was like having velvet fingertips. But it was soft like a girl. So I touched it like a girl. And it touched me like a girl. A sweet soft girl, the sweater. And I carried it around in the day like a sweater, but at night like a girl. And it went with me like a girl, but I never arrived like a man. Then I was in my father's office, just sitting, with the sweater. I was in the day, but it was so soft. And it was cold.

Art & Letters

SO WE BUILT A FENCE

It felt like the night.

"But then I was interrupted. I got up and left. I forgot the sweater right in the chair, in my father's office.

"The next day I woke and remembered. I passed the office and there she was, outside, all folded up like a sweet sleeping girl. So soft. So I picked her up to take her with me. But I heard my name. I heard "Blond Jon" and I turned and saw my father. And he saw me and he saw the sweater. But he didn't know. I could see that he didn't know. He asked. I began to tell him, all about her and I, the party, the search, the girl, and then I stopped; I stopped before the night. I stopped and held her up. Up to my father's face I held her. So he could feel. Because she is soft. I touched his cheek with her and said she was soft. And he said "soft" softly. And I think he felt her right, because I think he liked it alright. And he never knew about her and I. Because I lied. By not saying, but just touching, he never knew. And it was a good lie. Don't you think, Petruski?

"Did you know that a beer, a small beer, has as many calories as a schnitzel? I mean not a small schnitzel, a serious sized schnitzel. Do you believe that? I mean it doesn't matter if you believe it or not; it's true. That's why some times some people will say, 'I am going to have a schnitzel.' They don't have a schnitzel, they have a beer. Because who would tell you if they were going to have a schnitzel, if they were going to have a schnitzel? I heard it from my father's friends. But they're the same, a schnitzel and a beer. They have the same calories. I mean not the same ones, but equal ones, so they end up the same. They are the

same, but different enough so you can exchange one for the other. You can say one and mean the other, because it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what you say, only what you do. Because at the end no one listens to what you say.

"I wrote a poem today, Petruski. I won't read it to you like a morning dove. It's about. It's about this town, Petruski. I mean I think that it affects us in a way. It's where we live and what we know. And I wouldn't know what to write a poem about. Except this town, what would I write about? I like poems. It's not gay; I just like poems. Because I don't have to hear about a man putting down his glass. Maybe there's a poem about a man putting down his glass. But if there is, then I might like it. Because the man knows he's putting down his glass. And he feels it, because it's a poem. And then I feel it because it's a poem. Otherwise we should just forget about a man putting down his glass. Because it doesn't matter.

"The poem, the one about the town, describes it. That's all. It describes the town like the town looks at certain times on certain days. When everything is the same, but something is different. Maybe the sun, maybe the moon, maybe they see each other and they're both different; maybe you're different and they're the same, or maybe nothing's different, but you think like a poem. And then there's that man putting down his glass, in the poem, 'cause he's in the town. And the town is the poem. And then there's this night. I mean, I know that we're waiting out the night. That's the plan. And it's getting on in the night, and so things are becoming right. But Petruski, I might write a poem about tonight."

PETRUSKI'S YOUTH - III

"Put your unitard on, Petruski!⁷⁹ You've got to wear a unitard if you're going to wrestle⁸⁰. Put your cup on too, underneath your codpiece⁸¹, but over your cod. Because you've got to protect your fish. And your head. Where's your headpiece? Wear a headpiece to protect your head. Three little⁸² pieces, Petruski, it isn't too much to ask⁸³.

"Today's a big day Petruski⁸⁴. It's important that you perform like who you are and who you ought to be⁸⁵. It's important that you let the mirrors be generous⁸⁶. It's important to be great⁸⁷. And it's important to have class⁸⁸.

"Is that a moustache you're growing Petruski⁸⁹? You should never nurture what won't let you kiss a lady's hand⁹⁰. And you should always kiss a lady's hand. Because she likes that.

"Do you have priorities Petruski⁹¹? You've got to have priorities, in a list. Carry it around in your wallet and let hygiene be number one on that list. Never let Indian food be number two⁹²; Indian food is not a priority. But the list is. It is a priority. Maybe even before hygiene⁹³.

"Number three should be never to live in your car⁹⁴. Don't even do it for a day⁹⁵. You can't have class in the morning⁹⁶, and you won't be great in the day. It's most important to be great in the day; maybe even before hygiene⁹⁷.

"I've got something to give you, Petruski⁹⁸. It's a book and it will help you perform. Here it is⁹⁹; read it¹⁰⁰; think, about what famous

men are these¹⁰¹. By thinking of things you can understand them¹⁰². And by understanding them you'll be able to wrestle¹⁰³. Wrestling is the most important thing; it's the reason we're here¹⁰⁴.

"Wrestling is a gentleman's game; it belongs to us. So you've got to belong to it. Wrestling is a dance; it's not a manly game of ass-grab¹⁰⁵. Wrestling is about moving as you move; it's about harmony and melody; it's about grace¹⁰⁶.

"Petruski, stand straight, erect. Let me see your hand. Do you feel comfortable using this hand to bring a man to his knees¹⁰⁷? When you step in that circle, in the kick-ass-zone¹⁰⁸, you've got to be ready to win. Otherwise you won't know how to move. And movement is how you express yourself¹⁰⁹. Always remember, if you don't express yourself, who will¹¹⁰?

"And you've got to do things now. I mean today, Petruski. Today you've got to perform and wrestle like you mean it. Be more a man than less a man. Petruski, live a life of effort. Petruski, live a life of finesse. Because this is what people will remember. When you die, people will only remember you for today. Yes, there's the tombstone and yes the eulogy. But a man's tombstone is merely an old rock and his eulogy an anticlimactic footnote. Today, this match will define you.

"Do you have any questions Petruski?"

"Yes. What do you think of *Playboy*?"

"There it is.¹¹¹"

⁷⁹ This was how every conversation with the coach began. For some time Petruski had stopped hearing this statement as a literal commandment, but now only heard it as a pretense and sometimes a pretext. The statement had the startling effect of gathering Petruski's attention and erasing any thoughts that might be clouding his mind. Petruski was now transfixed, by virtue of the exclamation, on the athletic genius before him.

Many times, Petruski was already wearing his unitard when the coach instructed him to put it on. The contradiction didn't bother either of them, because it was mutually understood that most of what is communicated between the coach and his sportsman lay beneath the surface of the words.

⁸⁰ Petruski felt that he already knew this.

⁸¹ The only place that Petruski had ever heard this term was from Shakespeare. It made him feel weird that Shakespeare spoke like his coach.

⁸² Petruski cringed at the coach's use of the word, "little," in regards to his "fish."

⁸³ Petruski thought hard about this. Three things usually are not too many things to ask. If the coach had wanted three favors, they would not be too much to ask. But these three things, these three pieces, concerned what the coach once termed, "a man's delicacies." Thus they straddled the line of being too much to ask.

⁸⁴ Still fixated on the diminutive adjective, Petruski heard and realized the enormity of the day before him.

⁸⁵ The coach once told Petruski, "Who you are is who you are, but I'll show you who you ought to be." Petruski took this to heart and thereafter looked hard for example.

⁸⁶ In a common instance of perhaps unintended poetics, the coach once announced to Petruski, "If memory serves me correctly, my life was one where mirrors reflected generously." This seemed like such a strange and beautiful thing to say, and it prompted Petruski to begin thinking about memory and remembrance.

⁸⁷ Greatness for greatness sake was

something new. Petruski knew the importance of being great, but this always seemed to be a means. Now greatness stood as its own end. The statement rang with dissonance to ears that had grown accustomed to hearing the dual intentionality of actions. Here there was the sonorous unity of an act done purely for its own sake.

⁸⁸ Class seemed to be the coach's premise on life, and therefore wrestling. Petruski once heard a rumor that the coach dropped out of college in order to spend his tuition on a new Rolex. That was class. But the coach felt vulnerable walking around with a new Rolex draping his wrist, so he never wore it. The coach began learning different fighting techniques in order to protect his watch, and eventually settled on wrestling. Petruski did not know how he felt about the rumor.

⁸⁹ Petruski was not growing a moustache. It was merely the harsh lights of the room, momentarily obscured by his upper lip that created the illusion of a teenage moustache.

⁹⁰ Was this absolute, Petruski wondered? Was it an absolute rule to live by? What won't let you kiss a lady's hand, besides a moustache? Why the moustache? Does no woman like the feel of a well-groomed moustache against her gentle wrist? Is it absolute for both women and moustaches? Women confused Petruski. This seemed wonderful that there was an absolute rule that incorporated at once both women and moustaches.

⁹¹ Petruski thought this a strange thing to ask another.

⁹² Petruski wondered why it was that hygiene and Indian food stood in contradiction to each other. How could all the food of a foreign land be in total opposition to hygiene?

⁹³ Petruski was confused now on whether the idea of having a list of priorities must be written on that list. It seemed that the very existence of the list should announce its own importance in the quiet way of simply being, rather than having to be written next to a bold Roman numeral on that list.

⁹⁴ The making of the list seemed to give higher priority to the list than its mention on the list.

⁹⁵ Petruski felt strange in hearing his coach speak in syllogisms. Something about the verbal use of formal logic, used decisively by the coach, gave Petruski a queer feeling.

⁹⁶ Petruski did not know how far this statement extended, so he allowed it to be boundless. He allowed it to cover all the ground that it could cover, all the ground that the existential verb and locative adjective could claim as their own.

⁹⁷ This negative priority seemed problematic to Petruski. Why, he thought, should this negative commandment stand alone on the list, in light of all the other infinite possibilities of negative commandments? In order to make sense of this, Petruski had to transform this to a positive priority. This he did by making it the converse: Always live in an immovable home.

⁹⁸ The coach seemed to be tempted by this constant possibility.

⁹⁹ Because of his age, Petruski could not hear, "Class in the morning." He only heard, "Class in the morning."

¹⁰⁰ From years of seeing hygiene usurped by yet another contender, Petruski began to suspect that perhaps hygiene was not as important to the coach as he made it seem. It was at these moments that Petruski eyed the coach in order to find physical evidence to back this invading suspicion. Besides for the apparent consistency in the coach's wardrobe, Petruski never found any evidence.

¹⁰¹ These were dying words for Petruski.

¹⁰² Here he handed Petruski the book, crisp and well kept, from the shelf.

¹⁰³ Here he opened the book, flipping through the text, fingering the pages as if they were a familiar and sentimental neighborhood.

¹⁰⁴ Here he shut the book forcefully and pushed it upon Petruski as if to express that it could stay with the coach for no longer; its time had come to sit on another's shelf.

¹⁰⁵ This sounded familiar. Petruski had heard these words before in a book. But he could not place them so they now belonged to the coach. Petruski considered claiming them for himself.

¹⁰⁶ Petruski felt strange in hearing his coach speak in syllogisms. Something about the verbal use of formal logic, used decisively by the coach, gave Petruski a queer feeling.

¹⁰⁷ Petruski did not know how far this statement extended, so he allowed it to be boundless. He allowed it to cover all the ground that it could cover, all the ground that the existential verb and locative adjective could claim as their own.

¹⁰⁸ The ambiguous nature of this question allowed Petruski room to ponder its intent. Was it a question of individual responsibility or social responsibility? Petruski also wondered if the question was purposively ambiguous in order to highlight the dual nature of duty-at once both to oneself and to society.

¹⁰⁹ This reaffirmed Petruski's suspicion that *Playboy* lay at the cusp of history. The rest fell into place.

¹¹⁰ The ancient dialogue is a series of

¹¹¹ The ancient dialogue is a series of

PETRUSKI'S PROJECT - I

Dear Playboy,

History moves and no one knows why. The present becomes the past, and an unknown future pushes itself into the visible present. History always moves and there are theories on how and why. I believe it is pornography. At this age you are at the cusp of pornography; therefore you are at the cusp of history. This is wonderful.

I would like to be a part of history. But I have nothing to contribute to pornography. I do, however, have a story. Alongside the pictures, you carry stories that ride the coattails of the pictures. I believe that my story should be read beside a picture of a naked lady. Then it will become history.

Sincerely,
Peter I. Petruski

PETRUSKI'S PROJECT - II

The room was neither built in relation to the sun's movements nor against them; it was ambivalent to the sun. Yet at dusk, the sun cast a golden light into the room. The light forced its way in through the two southern windows, and through their gauzy curtains, and filled the room with a gentle but imposing golden bath. All the objects in the room stood out brilliantly, yet each was softened, rounded, and ultimately consumed by the invading light. The light, like a Viking skilled in the art of destruction, lay siege upon the four corners of the room. But this light was not a new visitor; it had been coming every day for almost thirty years. And every evening the bed received its share of the radiance. The couple on the bed had once relished the golden fog and had, at times, tried to obscure it. But they could not numb themselves to it. So they lay, naked, in positions of awkward consent and tried to fall asleep.

"Good night." The gray, naked, and half-sheeted man said to his drowsy wife.

"Good night love." She lay silent, her eyes battling their own weight. His eyes were fully open, concentrating intently on nothing.

The man broke the silence again, "what I said earlier...I don't think I meant it like you heard it."

"I know; but it sounded that way."

The man moved his arm, and the joint of his elbow met his neck in an unnatural place. "I sometimes have a hard time trying to say what I mean..."

"I know..."

"...because it takes me time to hear and to speak what I need to say..."

¹¹² "You know," she began, "I've been thinking a lot about high-school lately."

¹¹³ "Class has been on my mind."

¹¹⁴ "Or maybe it isn't high-school, but everyone's there, even the coach. Although he doesn't look like him, I know it's him."

¹¹⁵ "There's a long hallway leading up to it..."

¹¹⁶ "...And everyone's in the gym for a group picture, maybe..."

¹¹⁷ "...The gym's in the basement beneath the annex."

¹¹⁸ "No, no. It's a dance. Because we're all dancing."

¹¹⁹ "And Mr. Joe is across the hall cleaning the bathrooms and smoking cigarettes..."

¹²⁰ "...But I'm not. I'm hanging out by the bleachers, alone, quietly..."

¹²¹ "...Because that's what he always did..."

¹²² "...Watching..."

¹²³ "...And we're learning the difference between 'affect' and 'effect'..."

¹²⁴ "...No one's talking, only dancing and..."

¹²⁵ "...a 'a' and 'e'..."

¹²⁶ "...Watching..."

¹²⁷ "...That's the difference..."

¹²⁸ "...And some are sad that they're not dancing..."

¹²⁹ "...With an 'e' it's from a cause..."

¹³⁰ "...But I don't think I am..."

¹³¹ "...And with an 'a' it's like an emotion..."

¹³² The first paragraph of this letter corresponded due to a short series of correspondences between you and me.

¹³³ This statement is in itself a footnote, usually implied, to any group of statements.

¹³⁴ As well they should.

¹³⁵ Without footnotes, one could not be this concise and this forceful.

¹³⁶ The first paragraph of this letter

¹³⁷ Any system of truth or morality based on absolutes tends to either mitigate or disintegrate. It is difficult to navigate between the harsh lines of absolute. Even Kant, with his absolutes drawn in the German sand, could not live under the rule of his own categorical imperative.

¹³⁸ The first paragraph of this letter

¹³⁹ The first paragraph of this letter

¹⁴⁰ The first paragraph of this letter

¹⁴¹ The first paragraph of this letter

¹⁴² The first paragraph of this letter

¹⁴³ The first paragraph of this letter

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¹⁶⁷ The first paragraph of this letter

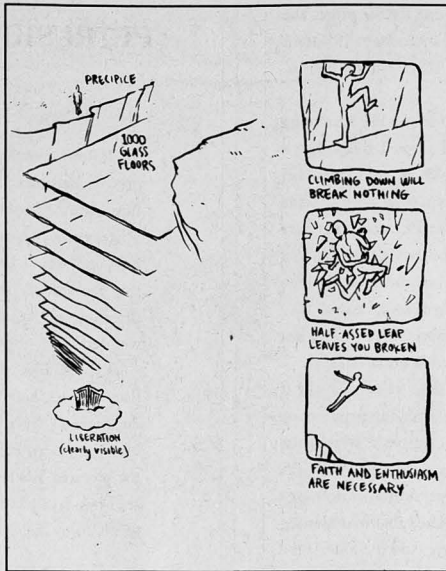
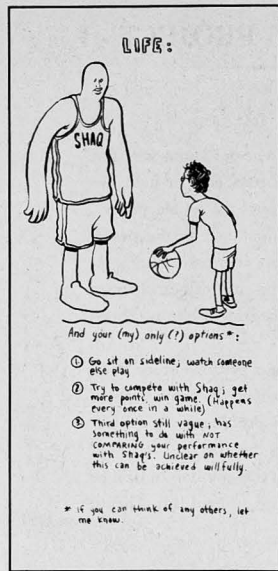
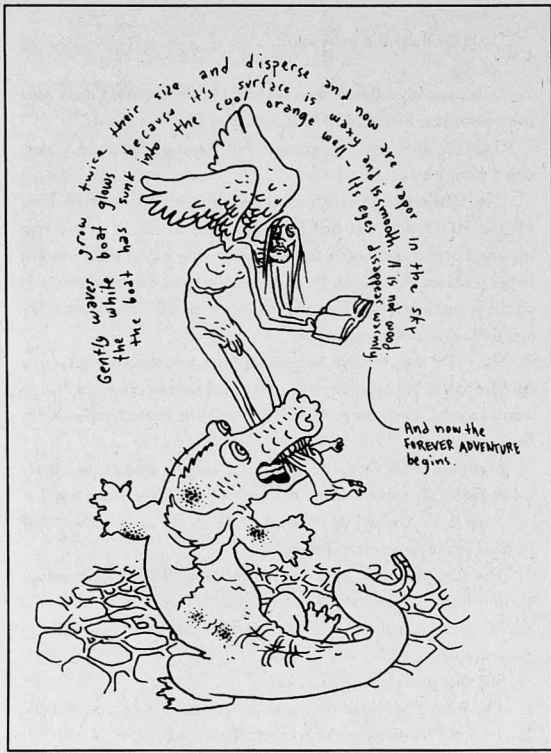
¹⁶⁸ The first paragraph of this letter

¹⁶⁹ The first paragraph of this letter

¹⁷⁰ The first paragraph of this letter

Art & Letters

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KIME AGINE by HIROSHIMA LEMON

What's with the dress?

t-shirt

it's solidarity

Dear God! What was I thinking?

RIVER JUMP: 200 POINTS

TREE CLIMB: 50 POINTS

MOUNTAIN TREK: 900 POINTS

at what point do shitty things get so shitty they turn good again?

Being naked can be shitty - but only as a result of societal hang-ups.

I just got married to a harpy who will sap my already dwindling supply of dignity + ambition.

ex best friend

That's more sad and shitty than the gallon jugs of purple juice at the super market.

not so

My rebirth will allow me to be a focused + compassionate father to my brood.

why are you naked?

I'm re-discovering free will

me too

shove

shove

shove

WWW.F0NEWPLANET.COM/HIROART.HTML



NUBS OF YELLOW BEAK CRACK THE SILENT WHITE SHELL

KRUNK ©2003 Tautkus

The business people on their lunch breaks at this local restaurant

Are made happy by a young man bouncing a basket ball

He reminds them of when it was o.k. to pursue whatever made them happy

They don't know that the young man is live entertainment, hired by the restaurant for that purpose

KRUNK ©2003 Tautkus

In this town, where most people have left because they have better places to go...

Police start forcing people to walk the street at gun point

For, without chaos, they'd have nothing to order

As planned, other officers from the same town arrest these officers and their jobs are given even more purpose

Ben Katchor's Hotel & Farm

THE LAMBSWOLL HOTEL OFFERS A NEW FORM OF IN-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT.

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ROOM 231, HMM?

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WELCOME TO THE LAMBSWOLL HOTEL. "ROOM-HISTORY" SERVICE. YOUR ROOM SERVICE, ROOM 231—HAS HAD A LONG AND ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY. IT'S PREVIOUS OCCUPANT WAS...

HARRISON JOVE, ESTIMATED AGE: 47, PHARMACEUTICAL SALESMAN, MORSIL, IL. ROOM SERVICE: VEAL SCALLOPINI, VANILLA ICE CREAM, TEXAS OMELET. ROOM REFRIGERATOR: THREE GINGER ALES, SPANISH PEANUTS...

THE FAT SLOB. I CAN JUST SEE HIM LOUNGING ON THIS BED. UGH!

VIDEOS VIEWED: THE TRAVELS OF KING SORE-POW, THE HESIAN FLY...

MEANWHILE, A HIDDEN CAMERA RECORDS THE ROOM'S CURRENT OCCUPANT.

I HOPE THEY'VE DISINFECTED THE PILLOWS.

DRIVES A 2001 MILKLEG DELUXE.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VIDEO, ANOTHER OFFER IS MADE.

FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$12, DISCREETLY BILLED TO YOUR ACCOUNT, WE OFFER HISTORIES OF THE ROOM'S THREE PREVIOUS OCCUPANTS. LEARN WHO LEFT BURN IN CIGARETTE BURN, YOUR BLANKET, DISCOVER WHOSE DRESSES HUNG ON YOUR HANGERS, WHO BATHED IN YOUR TUB...

MUCH LATER THAT NIGHT.

MARIA ANVIL, ESTIMATED AGE: 36, ADVERTISING SALES, GIMEL, CA...

PETTY

THIS WAS ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, I HAD JUST BEEN RELEASED, AND I WAS HUNGRY, TIRED, AND DEAD BROKE.

I HADN'T BEEN BACK TO THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD IN AGES.

HMM... THE PILLOWS SMELL STRANGE.

CLICK

SMELL

IN FACT, THE WHOLE PLACE SMELLED OF DELAY AND BROKEN PROMISES.

NO, IT SMELLED LIKE FISH. HA! I HATE FISH.

HOW STRANGE. I CHANGED INTO SOME CLEAN CLOTHES TO GET RID OF THE STENCH.

WHOSE ARE THOSE?

I HAD BEEN KIND OF WORRIED THAT WHEN I CAME BACK, EVERYTHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT.

BOY WAS I WRONG!

FLUSH! FLUSH! FLUSH!

IT WAS AS IF NOTHING HAD CHANGED AT ALL.

KRASH!!!

SO I TOOK SOME OLD PHOTOS AND LEFT.

GARY PANTER **SMOKE WAGON**

WHERE ARE YOU HEADING, SAM?

SOUTH OF THE BORDER!

ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU SHOULD BE OUT HERE WITH ALL THAT CASH?

MAYBE WE SHOULD HEAD BACK.

I'M NOT GOING BACK!

LIFE IS SHORT. THE ROAD IS LONG. LET'S GET THE HELL OUTA HERE.

GARY PANTER **SMOKE WAGON**

I'M SO BORED. I WISH WE COULD HAVE A LITTLE ADVENTURE.

OH YEAH? FOLLOW ME!

I KNOW SOME REALLY GOOD PLACES.

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

THIS BEATS ALL, RIGHT?

MAYBE.

THIS PLACE HAS IT ALL!

NO CHOCOLATE BUNNIES.

GARY PANTER **SMOKE WAGON**

ARE YOU GUYS DEMONS FROM HELL OR WHAT?

HA HA! THEY'RE NOT DEMONS. JUST CHUMPS!

OH YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT! THEY'RE TOO STUPID TO BE DEMONS!!!

WERE YOU JUST GOING TO ACT LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED?

NO.

COQUETTES & COKEHEADS

TOP DRAWER, TOP SHELF

from GEN ADV. page 14

collecting woman to have dinner with my 24yo craftsman friend: shy, 5'10, outstanding vegan chef, gorgeous guy! email: metrolco@riseup.net

PERSONAL: fire and water don't mix, but you're still my favorite mountain goat!! love, this moody crab

PERSONAL: Me: Young. Awesome. Cute. You: Old. Rich. Willing to buy me shit. Please: Stay at your current location and await further instructions.

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PUBLISHING, FORTHCOMING: My short story, "Lollipop Land", will be published in the inaugural issue of Los Angeles Review (Red Hen Press), appearing in mid-March, 2004. My short story, "Invisible Pleasures", is about to appear in Yemassee (University of South Carolina), due December 1st. For a different style in fiction, come to www.awdean.com.

SAVE SKULKY: On Saturday November 8th a man who has touched many of our lives was injured when he and his bicycle were struck by a car in Northern Liberties. Jason "Skulky" Skulkenstein suffered a broken collar bone along with a serious injury to his pride. For more information about how you can ease his pain during his long and hard recovery period contact crazy4wayne@hotmail.com. Donations in the form of canned goods, grilled cheese and handjobs are being accepted. Please, no cash.

SKATEBOARD ADVOCACY NETWORK: Established in Philadelphia in June of 2003, the Skateboard Advocacy Network (S.A.N.) was created to provide a non-partisan, unified voice for skateboarders. We work with government, business, and civic organizations to find workable solutions regarding issues related to skateboarding, including but not limited to the creation, design, funding and maintenance of free and public skateboard facilities. S.A.N. is a non-profit organization that works to improve the public's perception of skateboarding through education, communication and the distribution of information pertaining to skateboarding. Want to make a donation? Skateboard Advocacy Network / P.O. Box 22384 / Philadelphia, PA 19110-2384 / www.skateboardadvocacynetwork.org

SPACE TO SHARE, APARTMENT: Roommate wanted for beautiful Spruce Street apartment. Wood floors, skylights, working fireplace. Must be able to discuss film. No TV watchers please. Steiger@acnatsci.org

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SPACE FOR RENT, FLORIDA: West Palm Beach, lg home, 4 bd/3 bath, pool, yard. \$300/wk or \$800/mo. George 561-818-5328.

SPACE WANTED: Circus Club in search of winter den. We, of the circus persuasion are looking for an indoor facility to practice our skills through the winter months. You have a warehouse, church, gymnasium, studio, barn or junior high (preferably with high ceilings) that you'd be willing to lend or loan. We'd like to rig a trapeze and include you in our fun. Email me with your rich uncle's phone number, janmichael@earthlink.net.

SWAPS, TAPES FOR TAPES: I'm looking to trade eclectic mixtapes with anyone who is interested. I want to hear all those rare tracks that shake your soul. And in return I'll send you a 90-minute cross-section of the music that keeps my booty shaking and my heart thumping. Sebastian

Petsu 4811 Springfield Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19143 poet-sgroove@yahoo.com

TUTOR: Academic tutor with creative approach in Center City available. Experience working with all ages on a variety of subjects, and with students with learning disabilities like ADHD and dyslexia. References available from happy clients. Contact Elizabeth at ebzz_99@yahoo.com.

VENUE: Broke? Bored? Underage or just old and cranky? Come to the Rotunda, where we present free shows for all ages. The entertainment ranges from live rock, hip hop, electronic, jazz, and more, to theater, puppetry, film, dance, political events, and just about anything else your mother doesn't want you to experience. The Rotunda: 4014 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. www.foundation-arts.org. 215-573-3234

WANTED: ARTISTS, CRAFTERS, & VENDORS: For Rotunda Flea Market fundraiser, Sunday, Dec. 14th, 2003, 11am-5pm. At the Rotunda, 4014 Walnut Street. Due to budget cuts and rising expenses, The Foundation, which is the student and community group that maintains The Rotunda, needs your help to keep its level of community programming consistent for the 2004 calendar year. Over the past few years, The Foundation has presented free, all-ages events that are open to the public at The Rotunda. These events have run the gamut from traditional Indian music to DIY punk shows, experimental electronic showcases to puppet-making workshops, political film screenings to black light dance theater, etc. The Foundation is looking for artists, crafters and people to sell their stuff—anything goes—from original, handmade art & photographs, crafts and baked yumies, to vintage goodies, used books and records, clothing, those rollerskates you outgrew long ago, and other neat stuff. Table spaces are just \$10 for the first space - (6 ft. across x 3 ft. deep, includes depth of table) and \$5 for each additional space per vendor. Bring your own table/display or arrange in advance to rent (1) table for \$2. Your \$10 rental fee goes straight to The Foundation at The Rotunda and you keep all the cash for stuff you sell! Once your space is reserved, you will receive instructions for sending payment and load-in/load-out for the event. To rent a space, please contact Gina Renzi at The Rotunda at 215-573-3234 / gina@foundationarts.org. Please reserve your space by November 30th, 2003.

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WEBSITE: Have you been Conspiracized? www.conspiracized.tv. UNDERSTANDING WILL COME IN TIME...

WEBSITE: www.thetroublewithweeency.com

WEBSITE: Word Riot. Good writing. No remorse. www.wordriot.org

What is the New Society? It's a lot like the Old Society, really, but less pretentious. The New Society consists of, for example, the white-collar professionals that pour out of Blue Cross, Comcast, and Towers Perrin; the mid-level managers, salespeople, the IT people and so on. The Old Society still measures success by how big their Main Line house is, what colleges their kids are going to, and how many black tie events they are invited to. The New Society, is more interested in having a good time, and hanging at the Windrift in Avalon. This column will focus on what the New Society is up to.

My name is Brian Rochford. I am 42-year-old local bachelor. For a living, I sell mortgages. For fun, I do this. One night in September, I was sitting at a local taproom on S. 15th St. by the name of McGlinchey's, waiting for my deputy society guys Kevin Custer, and Terry O'Brien (we Irish operate better in a pack). I was approached by a 20-something young man—he was well-dressed as I recall—and he handed me a copy of *The Independent*, which I had heard of but had not yet read. I found *The Independent* too wide to read sitting on my barstool, so I took it home and read it at a later date. As I read, I noted that the paper lacked a proper society column, and I thought the editors might be interested in a social angle that I could provide.

A few emails later, we were in business. About fifteen years ago I met a Center City gentleman by the name of Art Coyle, with whom I would become good friends with. Art, being ten years my senior, single, with a home in Society Hill, certainly knew his way around town. From Elan (now the Prime Rib in the Warwick) to the Second Story (12th & Walnut), to the Black Banana, an after hours club at Third and Race, we hit the town in search of well-dressed, attractive women to charm. I learned a lot about Society from Art, such as the advantage of being in "the know", when it came to events in the city. These events ranged from restaurant, club and bar openings, to charity balls, private parties, and cultural events. To stay in the loop, I gradually developed a network that provided me with the times and locations of these functions. I have found that it is far more fun to be at a social

THE NEW SOCIETY

BY BRIAN ROCHFORD



Left: Brian Rochford and Ms. Pennsylvania 2002. Right: Rochford and Howard Eskin.

event than to read about it after the fact in Stu Bykofski's column. Sometimes, Art and I had to rely on unabashed confidence or guile to gain access. We always looked and dressed the part, and the gift of gab never hurt either. Art eventually got married (he met his lovely wife Maureen, when my sister set me up on a blind date with her, and they happened to meet). And so the torch of Society was passed. As I continued to network my way up the social ladder, the next natural step was to go legit.

Fall is always a busy social season, but two events stick out in my memory. The first is a series of happy hours sponsored by John Street's mayoral campaign. Politically, I am an independent. The party system appalls me. Hell, I don't even live in the city and can't vote anyhow. It amazes me that both parties would vote for Mickey Mouse if he were on their ticket. What ever happened to voting for the best candidate? But I was interested in meeting the power brokers. These happy hours were

held at Chickie's & Pete's, 32nd, the Irish Pub, and Loie. I was able to meet all of the players including Mr. Street, his wife Naomi Post, his son Sharif. While everyone by and large was cordial, which in the midst of the bugging scandal was quite admirable, the most charming person I met was City Controller Jonathan Sidel. I find it rather refreshing when I meet a politician with a sense of humor, someone who can laugh at himself, and our political system. Mr. Sidel was truly a breath of fresh air.

Easily the best party of the month was held at Stephen Starr's Buddakan. The party was thrown by Comcast and HBO, and produced by the Cashman Associates. Special thanks to Carrie Nork, of the Cashman Agency, Carrie does a tremendous job, always with her trademark smile. When I saw the red carpet rolled out and the spotlights bursting to the heavens, I knew it was going to be a great party. I have to hand it to Stephen Starr and his staff. I have been fortunate enough to attend many of Mr. Starr's openings and other parties, and one thing is certain; he and his staff do things right. No wonder his empire continues to grow, most recently with the opening of El Vez, formerly Tony Goldman's Trust restaurant on 13th Street. The party at Buddakan featured HBO stars Cynthia Nixon (from the television program "Sex in the City"), Lorraine Bracco, Vincent "Big Pussy" Pastore and Dominic "Uncle Jr." Chianese, (all from the television program "The Sopranos"), among others. Local celebrities included the omnipresent Billy King (76ers president), Howard Eskin (NBC and WIP), Michael Barkan and Dei Lynam (Comcast), Derrick Coleman (76ers center), Robyn Stevens (CN8), and the very personable Monica Malpass (WPVI 6).

The New Society column would like to welcome Alycia Lane, a new news anchor for Channel 3. I had the opportunity to meet Alycia at several events last month, and she is every bit as nice as she is pretty.

The winter promises to be full of events, more people to meet and stories to tell. Please feel free to e-mail me with invites to events, openings, etc., ideas for stories, celebrity sightings, or for that matter, just to say hello. My email address is ROCHYROLLS@aol.com.

Brian Rochford writes on society for THE INDEPENDENT.

tons of interesting drawings and comics - updated every week/day

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WE

THE UNDERSIGNED,

in signal recognition of the stupendous feat of the beloved and hairy Philadelphia folk singer, ADAM BRODSKY, wish to tender our most admiring congratulations to him, to offer the laurel and hearty handshake, and to say "Well done." If more hairy Philadelphia folk singers displayed the same (or greater) degree of pluck, verve, of inimitable moxie and chutzpah as does our Mr. Brodsky, the world would be a better place for it.

Sincerely,

Eliot Duhan & EDO
Dave Lorenz
Vance "Spoiler" Lehmkuhl
Ray "Swami" Kempinski
Hoagy Wing
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— MICHAEL MCGETTIGAN

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"BOURGEOISIE NOW!" AT SPECTOR GALLERY

A Review: Jokes That Are Sharp On Both Ends

BY MICHAEL SULLIVAN AND THERESA MARCHETTA

Bourgeoisie Now! was the title of a failed social club that we tried to inaugurate during our senior year of college. We publicized all over campus with carefully designed posters bearing enticing slogans, asking if our fellow students felt uncomfortable being identified as upper middle class, or even middle class. We told them they were not alone; we were starting a club, in an effort to de-stigmatize the label "bourgeois." (The club's objectives were difficult to determine from the advertising; we had in fact only vague notions of possible letter-writing campaigns which would make the desires of bourgeois students known to those in positions of power.)

Our school was an expensive private university in southwestern Pennsylvania, filled with students from upper-middle-class backgrounds who we thought would turn a receptive ear toward our rally to class identification. But, despite our offers of free food and refreshment, no one came to the first official meeting of Bourgeoisie Now! Why? Maybe our publicity efforts could have used some polishing, or maybe the whole premise seemed too weird and uncomfortable. At any rate, we spent the next week eating the leftover ham and cheese croissants.

Perhaps if James Rosenthal had gone to school with us, we would have had a member, or at least someone who was intrigued by our idea. His October exhibition at Spector Gallery, entitled "Bourgeois and Loving It" delved into class signals with a pointed humor. He has painted plaques in bright tie-dye-like ink washes on watercolor paper. They exuberantly bear slogans like "Ivy league hipsters hit the coast", "ornamental grammar",

"post-pop/signature tune/dirty old man/vintage/virtue/duty-free", and "Mod Rule/Instant Myth". These phrases playfully mock the tastes and habits of privileged, well-educated bohemians who have cosmopolitan ambitions (or roots) and an engagement with the arts. We find that, although vague, these messages evoke surprisingly sharp images

When decorating apartments, our peers can apparently accommodate communist propaganda, discarded furniture from the street, and classy notions culled from glossy style magazines. Anything goes, as long as it comes from either the high or the low ends of spectrum of taste; we are uncomfortable with the middle area that defines most of our backgrounds.

More seriously, we remembered art students at our expensive university bristling with resentment at the suggestion that they came from privileged backgrounds. As artists, we had inherited a legacy of subversion, Marxist theory, and the critique of powerful institutions and mass media from previous generations. Yet many of us had also inherited a level of economic comfort from our families, which helped us gain access to the educational institutions that control much of the art production in the United States. This strange friction seemed to cause anxiety among our peers to the point that the issue of status couldn't be discussed without rancor. While

we respect our peers' reluctance to uncritically embrace bourgeois values, we remain puzzled by the guilty silence and sense of taboo regarding where we come from. This is why we are grateful for Rosenthal's humorous foray into this apparently treacherous territory. While many artists have admirably worked to expose class dynamics in society at large, very few have focused their attention on how class affects artists and gallery audiences themselves. In mirroring, or funhouse-mirroring, the idiosyncratic behaviors, fixations, and indulgences of his audience, Rosenthal calls for a lighter and more honest approach to our conflicted status.

Michael Sullivan and Theresa Marchetta are artists living in West Philadelphia.



James Rosenthal, Bourgeois And Loving It, 2003

and anecdotes of our friends and peers. We suspect that Rosenthal is talking to or about us, and we think many of his other viewers would feel the same way. In fact, we propose that Rosenthal has insightfully pinpointed the members of his audience and made them the subject of his work. His treatment of his constituency is definitely humorous, and we aren't quite sure if we are in on the joke, or its butt.

Whichever it was, we left the show discussing the ambivalence and even discomfort surrounding privilege among those we take to be Rosenthal's intended audience. We recalled a friend's observation that artists, when shopping for clothes, eschew mid-priced items and opt for either cheap thrift-store detritus or designer garments they can barely afford.

SPOTTINGS

BY CHARLIE V



John Street on left, Charlie V on right



Sam Katz on left, Charlie V on right

from TANGIER page 4

(one of which legendarily was responsible for the geography of the Northern coastline), and nothing is allowed to be done without the accomplishment of some unrelated, near-impossible mission. I have yet to understand why, for example, when I order coffee at one of the trillions of cafes here, the waiter often runs out the door, or pays a boy to do it for him, and find that the coffee is emanating from some place other than the café at which I'm seated.

Setting aside such a digression: your author complied with the royal guard's demand, really thinking nothing more of it than that the cardboard figures of authority are equal everywhere—those officers and agents who are employed in keeping the public separate from their governments and their private vassals, all of these the world over are uniformed jackasses, and one's battles with them ought to be carefully chosen. As it was, the guard—the single guard—on duty at the far gate, was a veritable kitten, and shared my unfounded enthusiasm for ancient wrecks. He led me onto the

palace grounds and gave me free reign there, among the toppled bricks and eroded colonnades of Cotta. There could not have been any security-based rationale for the first gate's closure—I was now free within the walls, no guards to watch me. The only matter was which guard had been responsible for my passage, the loner a quarter-mile to the South, or the gang of thugs two hundred yards to my East.

I did not in fact know that the King was then at the palace until I had seen the ruin, and was bound, in one of the Mercedes taxis of the country, back to Tangier. I noticed that the road—a thrilling coastal drive up hills and along oceanside cliffs—was lined with police, soldiers, and Moroccan flags. My driver and I surmised that we were following the route the King would follow as he passed between his city palace and his seaside retreat. This supposition was further confirmed when we came up directly behind the royal motorcade, a handful of black Mercedes girded by motorcycles. The soldiers and officers along each side of the road snapped into attention, twirled their guns, and

FINDINGS

BY HENRY FLOSS



(Man) found at Bainbridge & Leithgow

doffed their caps and helmets. I made a short-lived attempt to count the banners, my arithmetic and my color vision failing above eight thousand and seven. Red and green was everywhere—what wasn't a Moroccan flag was a row of simple colored fabric, and the rest was all strings of lights and rows of polished uniforms.

And so Mohammed VI, His Majesty the King of Morocco and Commander of the Faithful, entered Tangier with an auspicious stowaway in his motorcade—your sand-coated, heat-stricken author, riding in the oily back seat of a thirty-year old tan Mercedes "grand taxi". I waved with the utmost courtesy to the saluting armed forces of Morocco, and while there were too many mustachioed faces to make quick identification, I think it is likely that the captain of the palace guard was among those ranks, and that he was glad, when he saw me properly installed at the rear of the royal motorcade, that he had turned me away with good humor, and not with the point of his gun.

Jonathan Ephraim Underhill edited Three Weeks, a newspaper in Queens, New York.

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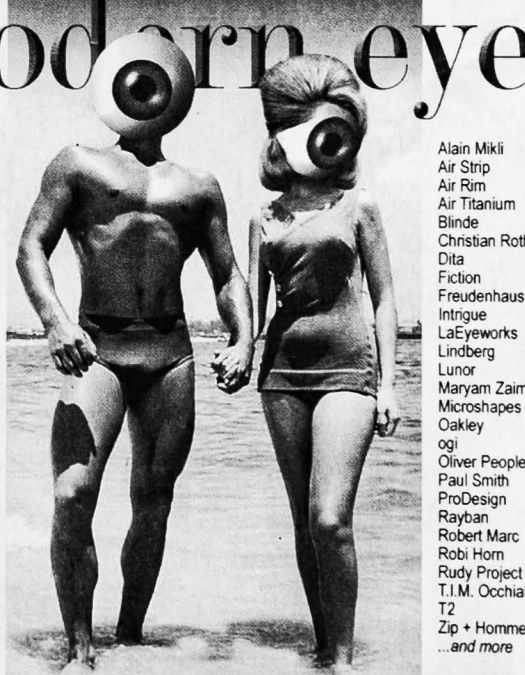
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SUCK IT UP & ENDURE

The thing about the cold weather is that it has got to be avoided. It has simply got to be avoided. Either that or it has got to be avoided. It clearly must be avoided. Today, it is advisable to sit around covered by a sweater of poor quality, trapped inside a heated room, embracing the radiator like some sort of displaced leper, or strip down to shorts and socks for a brisk outdoors foot race? Rural myth reliably indicates that immunity to both sickness and physical discomfort is achieved by exposure, a story you'll hear from every old wife and bloodletting natural scientist from Aristotle to Robert Burton. The calcification of tender humours from that of a chilly nippy to an Arctic ox-beast is best achieved by pushing the threshold of one's capacity to endure the cold. For example, members of Greek fraternal organizations which exist to advance the learning and mold the character of their members routinely boast of "building up a tolerance" for mind-numbing, morality-compromising beverages. To toughen up the skin, chap the lips to bleeding, and steel oneself against the advancing plague of winter, we come down on the side of exposing your bare skin to the cold. The immediate effect will be shivering of the frame, chattering of the teeth, and sickness of body. The lasting effect will be immunity to cold and/or ridicule from unenlightened passerby.

ANY THURSDAY
DROP YOUR PEARCE

Performance: Basket Mouth @ Café Izmir, 629 S. 9th St. Every Thursday, 7-10 p.m. Free.

According to Nigerian legend, a basketmouth is one who speaks without a filter, one who utters thoughts as quickly as they enter the mind. Western custom dictates that one keep most unpleasant and unflattering comments to oneself, lest they be insults aimed at another who occupies a lower station in life. Each Thursday evening, all are invited to Café Izmir to cast off the muzzles of society and do as one would do if one had a basket for one's mouth. This free-form, anything goes, party of daring truth tellers acts can be the perfect respite from the weekend days, which, logistical matters having been dispensed with during the workweek, the air is filled with calculated and insincere pleasantries. For more information, contact Yomi at phillyjojobo@hotmail.com. Even if you don't want more information, you should maybe contact him anyway, because he just happens to be the percussionist in the city's finest afrobeat ensemble.

ANY WEDNESDAY
THE BOX OF MANY SOUNDS

Music: Jukebox Night @ Tritone, 1508 South Street. Free. 21+

A lot of people like to go out and drink alcohol these days. And a lot of people who own musical instruments like to get up in front of a room full of drinkers to sing a few songs. And some of the drinkers, surprisingly, find that these small troupes of earnest guitar-strummers and ivory-ticklers distract them from the business at hand—which is drinking. Clearly, one has to be pretty arrogant to stand at the end of a room and demand attention (and often the money) from a room full of people with ideas and problems that they may not care to set into rhyming verses and perform. One antidote to this dilemma might be the Wednesday night special at Tritone: Jukebox Night. Put off laundry until the weekend and pump those quarters into the jukebox next to the bar. While it might not be the absolute best, the Tritone juke is among the city's most diverse, with selections from Sun Ra, Mission of Burma, Public Enemy, Sonic Youth, Al Green, and John Coltrane. Recommended parlor games to play on this night include "Play the Song That Will Result in the Selector's Receiving Dirty Looks," "How Many Attractively-Priced Whiskey and Beer Specials Does it Take Before My Ability to Perform a Handstand is Compromised," and "If Tritone Patrons Danced, This is the Kind of Dance They Would Do."

ANY AFTERNOON
EASY LIKE THE LSAT

The free anonymous HIV test is one tough competitor. If you can come up with a good cheap date that beats the free HIV test, we would like to hire you to edit this Forecast. Even the storied visit to the judge for the ol' marriage license will set you back at least fifty bucks. Free HIV tests are one of the few freebies (along with free school lunches, free needles, and free dogs and cats) that come from living in close proximity to experiments in high-density urban social engineering—anywhere else it would run \$35 to \$50. Center City alone has more than half a dozen place to get tested for free. For more information, visit www.aidsreal.org or call 215-985-2437.

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28 NOV. FRIDAY
SO YOU WANNABE HARDCORE?

Film: Porn Open Call The Parlor, 1170 S. Broad Street. 9 p.m. \$8.

There might not be a person alive today who isn't at least a little bit dissatisfied with what passes for pornography. A lot of it is downright offensive. Some pornographic films depict disreputable individuals in states of disrobing, getting involved in compromising situations. The folks at the Celluloid Sideshow believe that many of us might become pornography enthusiasts, were it not for the misogynistic, boring, unsexy, and downright lewd stuff that passes for titillation today. To correct this grievous wrong, they're throwing the second annual Porn Open Call. It welcomes all types of on-camera sex acts (by all types, they mean heterosexual, homosexual, and the always-provocative "other" category, that bestial and abominable open set whose members we dare not imagine) and promises to be as non-awkward as watching pornography in a large group of peers and strangers can be.

Music: Costes @ The Table Space, 948 N. Eighth St., 8 p.m., approx. \$5
By all accounts, an engagement with Costes, part music and part performance art, is not an event to be missed. At the mere mention of the name, the eyes of one who has seen them will open widely as if to communicate utter sincerity. The head will nod slowly and confidently and the voice will say, "When you see them, you will never forget them." Appearing with PCPCG (three cheers for acronyms!) and M Ax Noi Mach.

05 DEC. FRIDAY
GOING THREE TIMES

Art: Space 1026 Annual Art Auction @ 1026 Arch Street, 7 to 11 p.m. Free.

The trick to succeeding at an auction is to open one's wallet wide, but not wildly. Some have found advantage in stepping into the auction house and discreetly eyeing up the backside of other attendees. Such sly and seasoned buyers keep an eye on the bulge protruding from the pockets of potential opponents. A bigger bulge implies a wallet brimming full of cash, which betrays a likely high bidder. The veteran auction-goer will devise wiles to distract these deep-pocketed competitors, so that he might become the true king of the auction house, he who opens his wallet as narrowly as possible. The frugal and sneaky buyer might consider luring those with greater means by planting an oversized chocolate microscope in the back of the room. This method will probably not work at Space 1026 Art Auction, however, as the auctioneer, Mr. Todd Kimmell, is

difficult to ignore. Kimmell is six feet and five inches tall and possesses a booming voice that shakes windows in their frames and currency from unwilling billfolds. Even if you are a penniless pauper, it is worth attending this auction just to experience the live presence and banter of this impressively competent auctioneer. Expect to bid on one hundred items of various mediums, including pen and ink, photograph, oil and canvas, screenprint, and even newspaper. (THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT is a member of and has its offices at Space 1026, an artists' cooperative.)

06 DEC. SATURDAY
THE FUTURE OF VOTING

Symposium: Choosing Clarity, A Symposium on Voting Transparency @ Swarthmore College, 500 College Ave., Clothier Hall. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hacks, geeks, and wonks will discuss new voting technologies. A suggestion: If voting were more like video poker, more people would vote. The hoagie hustlers over at WAWA already know this.

12 DEC. FRIDAY
JUVENILHILISM

Music: The Paul Green School of Rock performs Classic Metal @ North Star Bar, 2639 Poplar St. 7:30 p.m., All Ages, \$7.

In an effort to put to shame metalheads who are slightly older and have slighter clearer complexions, the Paul Green School of Rock will play a night's worth of Classic Metal. And though perhaps not the highest form of culture, heavy metal, with its inverted hierarchies and occasional gender bending, might very well be the defining musical development in the later part of the 20th century. Either that, or it's the most lasting and the most damaging to the individual. While it is an acceptable in mainstream society to nurse an appreciation of the Beatles, or even the Sex Pistols or the Notorious B.I.G. into one's formative years (or even well into one's adulthood as a leftover and rebellious peccadillo) getting amped on Slayer is still frowned upon, and this is an injustice that the good Mr. Green is determined to correct. It seems that no one over the age of twenty-three can continue to appreciate the double-bass thunder, the lightning guitar solos, or boastfully Satanic lyrical themes without being a complete loser, at home only in the company of like-minded headbangers and heshers. Well, at least Paul Green and his institution have the vision to train a company of young outcasts in the finer points of metaldom, perhaps carving out a slightly larger safe place for social deviants determined to dress in black from head to toe, from New Year's Day to Christmas.

ANY DECEMBER DAY
TOUR THE RUINS

Art: "Empty: A Visual Experience of Abandoned Structures" @ Rutgers Camden Campus Center, 326 Penn St., Camden, New Jersey. Free. For directions, visit www.kemdesign.net/rutgersdirections. Free.

There are no shortage of art schools thrusting cameras into eager young hands and sending them forth with messenger bags a-jangle with SEPTA tokens to capture the city's stone remnants as they gradually settle back into dirt, bricks peeling away from their wooden skeletons in rosy strips like the flesh of a whale rotting on the beach. (Even worse are those masturbatory candids of the artist and friends in states of debauchery and undress, attempting to fill their steamingly fresh infant world with a mirage of a Manhattan studiously collaged from ... glossy magazines? Cable television?) The galleries are filled with the cursory impressions of this documentary corps, who take notice of one land-heap from the safety of the sidewalk before moving on to the next. The photographs that result may appear to be a black and white catalog for the next Sherrif's Sale, except these snapshots were born from that special state of aesthetic rapture—the ecstasy of exploration spiked with a whiff of fear—known only to the ghetto tourist.

Thankfully, Tony Smyrski's "Empty" promises to roll up its sleeves, rack some boltcutters, and set about infiltrating the façades of abandoned structures with photographs of inaccessible and rotting interiors, fleeting moments of trespass and danger as immediate as seeing sky where there's supposed to be ceiling. There will also be photographs by Melissa Farley of bright lights, dark rooms, and the young people of today, looking candidly sexy and often rather surly.

This is the first installment of monthly Rutgers art shows, to be curated by Smyrski. January's installment is slated to feature Dan Murphy, whose photographic chronicle of Philadelphia's decay and glory, *Stuck On The Map*, we have praised at length in these pages. Visit www.kemdesign.net for more information, and some fine visual musings in Flash on graffiti, urban planning and the state of design.

14 DEC. SUNDAY
MORE THAN JUST FLEAS

Shopping: Flea Market @ The Rotunda, 4012 Walnut Street, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Free.

In this economy, a good deal is nothing to scoff at. Some indicators indicate that the economy shows signs of recovery, while other indicators indicate just the opposite, while all the while, we work and we buy. The charts go up and the charts go down, with the only constants being the expansion of and rosy

prospects for the business of charts and their interpretation to the layman in simple snake-and-ladder terms. Manufacturing jobs, for example, seem to be in short supply, even as demanding shorts maintain a steady upstream supply of jobbers. Manufactured items, as well, seem to be abundant most everywhere. One can go to a sleepwalk and bump into any number and all manner of mass-produced products. In fact, many of these items, useful to the world, though not to their current owner, can be purchased cheaply, secondhand, at what is known as a flea market. The table rent proceeds from one such flea market will benefit the Foundation, a student and community group, that must raise funds to deal with a shrinking budget and expanding expenses (which is itself an indicator). For more information, pay a visit to www.foundationarts.org.

19 DEC. FRIDAY
TWO FIGURE PAINTINGS

Art: Red Dot 4 @ Spector Gallery, 510 Bainbridge, 6 to 10 p.m. Free. Also Saturday, and Sunday Noon to 5 p.m.

The thing about a conversation piece is that its ability to ignite a conversation is a direct function of its scarcity. No one is going to walk into a house, notice a clock radio, and remark, "what a fine clock radio!" It is wonderfully executed, the craftsmanship can't be beat, and I believe I saw the maker of this particular clock radio over by Clark Park the Tuesday before last. Nah. Some original artifact of visual stimulus, however, might start the conversation train with a might roar. Far from being oppressed by deadly silence, host and guest alike will speak in lively tones. "Why, is that a Thom Lessner original?" a guest might ask. "I recognize his exaggerated caricatures and bold colors from various screenprints found throughout Center City. He is truly a talent to watch out for." "Indeed that is, and did I happen to notice a Randall Sellers in your solarium?" the host might reply. "I've seen Mr. Sellers laboring over his finely detailed, miniature pen and ink fantasy-scapes in the local coffee shop." This line of question, statement, and response should last for some time, hopefully until next December, when Red Dot 5 will likely occur.

16 JAN. FRIDAY
FAMINE & WAR

Film: "North Korea: Beyond the DMZ" @ The Prince Music Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street, 7 p.m., \$10.

The Scribe Video Center presents a documentary on a young woman searching for lost family members in North Korea, to be followed by a selection of short works produced through the Third World Newsreel media arts center of New York.

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SAT 12/13 • 10\$

Consonant
(members of mission of burma, bedhead, the new year, come.)
French Toast
(DC, featuring members of tugazi, nation of ulysses, makeup)
South Congress

THU 12/18 • 7\$

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FRI 12/26 • 5\$

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PRIZES & INSTRUCTIONS

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With the weather turning crisp, Autumn and her tardy brother Winter are the perfect houseguests with whom to sharpen our wits. I can fondly recall that in my own youth I spent the colder parts of the year in the warmth of the Floss family winter bungalow, huddled by the hearth with Henry Floss Sr., barking out answers to tables of arithmetic and playing other seemingly dull, actually exciting, games. With each correct response, I would be rewarded with kind words of encouragement. An error would be met with an understated groan of disappointment. The Floss family, as you might imagine, holds high standards.

For your puzzling pleasure, the Bureau now initiates two new species of game into the waterbed that is this page. The first of which, I am sorry to report, is called *Acronymatron*. I had suggested the title *Define and Find*, which captures the essence of the puzzle and which rolls off the tongue and echoes some line from Auden or other. The editors of this paper, however, ignored my pleas and we are left with the sterile and medieval sounding canker-sore of a title. At any rate, this is a two-part noodle exercise. Secret Agents and prospective agents of the Bureau are to first determine the acronym from the list of clues, and then find that acronym in the adjacent word search. The second puzzle, as requested by Ms. Margaret Barton-Fumo (see Letters, Page Two), is a cryptogram, which is an existing game and therefore may retain its brutish title. Completion of this one involves deciphering the

letters to discover a fine specimen of verse encoded within. Have I not made myself sufficiently clear? The answers for the Acronymatron are all acronyms, which are abbreviations—ITMSYD for "Isn't This Making Sense You Dimwit?" for example. The acronyms are hidden within the field of the word search, both vertically and horizontally. You must find them and circle them. The Cryptogram is written in code. Each instance of a letter of the encoded verse has been switched with another letter. Determine which letters are which and you will be able to break the code. There. If you are still confused as to what to do, allow me to direct you to the latest issue of *Highlights*, which is an excellent magazine for children.

Furthermore, though I had lobbied that completion of a puzzle is a prize in itself, some of the higher ups make the case that a bribe is necessary. I am therefore obliged to offer a slip redeemable for \$30 of merchandise at Big Jar Books (located in the historic district at 55 N. Second St.) and Top Secret Agent status in the Bureau to the first puzzler to send two impeccably completed puzzles to the address listed below. Best of luck.

Yours,

Henry Floss

Chairman, Bureau of Puzzles & Games

Send your completed puzzles to: BUREAU OF PUZZLES & GAMES
C/O The Philadelphia Independent • 1026 Arch Street • Philadelphia, Penna. 19107

CRYPTOGRAM

BY JASON GIBBS

XSGJTY GP ZGKX-RJC MLEK, WSC XIXX
MLHX YWZXRMMK RWFYXC LS CXB,
GP QYXXH FYWF BLFY QWZSWFLGS NLXX,
WSC NXLSK GP NLGMXF YJX;
XWZFY BWSFK SGF RXWJFI FYWF DWI KQGZS
W MLHXSLSL FG PZWLM PMGBXZK;
IXW, FG FYX KFWZK, LP FYXI BXZX RGZS
PGZ KXWKGSK WSC PGZ YGJZK.
—BLMMLWD BGZCKBGZFY

ACRONYMATRON

Find and Circle the Acronymical Answers to the Clues

BY HENRY FLOSS

1. Trilateral trade agreement from mid-1990s.
2. Superhighway.
3. The most frequently referenced item on one's identification card.
4. Local 98.
5. Elephant cottillion; Lincoln's dogs.
6. The man, his wife, his kids, his dog, his ranch, his cows; former office manager.
7. For American fine art instruction, this is the oldest of the old schools.
8. Offers the kinds of associate's degrees; Paul Green is alumnus.
9. Motown Philly Exemplars (two answers).
10. Non-Olympic wrestler; not as mean as Leroy Brown.
11. The Star of the Show; the hardest-working man in show business.
12. The guide for those in need of style; sends information via wires.
13. Attention problems to the max.
14. Formation of overseas musical groups; influenced Metallica; Saxon, for example.
15. Notes on the treble staff; mnemonic device encourages good boys.
16. Collegiate rabble-rousers got their asses kicked in Chicago.
17. A group of females who have borne children and oppose #21.
18. Once ran a pig for president and brought #27's uncle to a halt.
19. Not to be found. Blame #6.
20. Numerals used to draw cash from kiosks.
21. Vehicular offense committed by drinkers.
22. Check these settings when #2

E J N S O A O P A H V J
R I T W D R S V P H D M
A B C E O J C N I H P F
S E P T A L U S N M I A
T W I N W O B H M A J B
C C P A S C A L P D O B
U S P S N A F T A D H D
E G B D F W L A F W J N
N A S A W W C Y A P Y E
Y C S Q W W I I R D S
S D L B J G O P W B U D
E C W K D U T V W A I S
D O B O D B I G O P O W
N O W M G D N C H J B D

goes down.

23. The top of the totem pole, swimming in options.
24. What Would Jesus Do? Well, what?
25. Arrested in Philadelphia at fast food eatery but claims to "like it raw."
26. Perpetual laggard tries to compensate with duotone tokens.
27. Fast companies rode on this rollercoaster.
28. Breathing apparatus best used below sea level.
29. Mid 1980s breakthrough

made is possible to hunt

30. Ducks in bad weather.
31. Founded by Ms. Friedman.
32. Sickness spread in bed (archaic).
33. The biggest fear of many; seems closer than ever before.
34. Pitcher's stat; the lower the better.
35. Mario the Magnificent channel.
36. Rank & file merged into one in 1955.
37. Wobblies.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S NOODLE EXERCISE

THE WINNERS:

GRAND PRIZE,
Top Secret Agent Status and Five Pounds of Book
Top Secret Agent Aaron Laufman-Walker

2ND PRIZE,
Secret Agent Status and One Pound of Book
Secret Agent Michael Heinzer
Secret Agent Gil Nusbaum
Secret Agent Walter C. Mankowski
Secret Agent Michele L. Grant
Secret Agent Nathan Kennedy
Secret Agent Michael Fahy

M	O	D	U	S	G	E	M	S	W	E	P	T
A	D	U	L	T	A	Y	A	H	A	X	L	E
S	E	G	N	O	Z	E	R	O	H	E	E	L
E	F	T	T	O	M	A	U	S	T	E	R	O
A	L	A	S	A	P	E	R	C	U	A	E	T
T	A	C	E	T	R	O	O	M	A	D		
M	O	T	H	R	A	R	I	M	B	A	U	D
A	U	D	I	O	A	W	F	U	L			
S	F	P	M	A	D	R	A	S	P	O	N	E
P	L	A	N	B	T	A	B	S	E	X		
L	O	U	I	S	B	A	R	A	G	O	N	
A	P	S	E	A	P	E	X	E	N	I	A	
S	P	E	C	J	E	D	I	E	M	O	R	
H	Y	D	E	A	R	E	A	R	O	G	E	R

Note to the Winners

Congratulations are due to Aaron Laufman-Walker, the puzzler whose winning crossword puzzle earned him Top Secret Agent status in the Bureau and five pounds of book, kindly donated by Uncle Sebastian. Though not the first participant to mail us his completed puzzle, Agent Laufman-Walker was the first to check his work carefully and thoroughly. Our mail department received several entries before Agent Laufman-Walker's arrived. Sadly, the hopefuls who mailed in this work proved quick with the pen but not with the mind. Agent Laufman-Walker, however, exemplifies just the type of puzzler that the Bureau values most. His entry, which shows signs of proofreading and revision, is clearly the work of one who takes his task seriously, one who will do a job correctly before he does it

quickly. The only advice that my judges and I can give Top Secret Agent Laufman-Walker is to sell his five pounds of book and enroll in the nearest school of penmanship. While we here at the Bureau are skilled in deciphering crypto-, kilo-, aero- and pictograms, it does not fall within our regular duties to go cross-eyed deciphering chicken scratchings. As usual, we pulled up our trousers and supererogated. But in the future, please be as precise with your pen as you are with your responses, Top Secret Agent Laufman-Walker.

Yours,

Henry Floss

Chairman, Bureau of Puzzles & Games

HENRY FLOSS' MONTHLY INVENTION



HOW TO CLEAN THE YARD WITHOUT A RAKE

Henry Floss pulls rope (A), which drops mallet onto Floss' fragile noggin (B), causing him to emit loud howl of anguish into megaphone (C). Howl bears uncanny resemblance to the mating call of the brown banded brush bird, which bolts into the air (D), prematurely shooting out an egg due to a combination of fright and arousal (E). Egg falls into magically suspended butterfly net (F). Net falls backward, lifting dumbbell (G), allowing bowling ball to roll down plank and nudge trashcan (H) directly into the onslaught of autumnal leaf discharge. If this device proves unsuccessful, take mallet and demolish all trees.

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